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David Thorley

WRITING ILLNES AND IDENTITY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

ABSTRACT

This thesis begins from the observation that seventeenth-century life-writing appears to have little recourse to the age's revolutionary medical developments when describing personal illness. It therefore seeks to explore the available textual frameworks for writing autobiographical accounts of illness, and the rhetorical strategies that writers of such texts used for adapting their illnesses to those frameworks.

My research is contextualised within discussions of early modern selfhood. Like a number of recent scholars, I reject the Burkhardtian assumption of a vibrant Renaissance self, born, fully formed, sometime during the Tudor age. I present examples of illnesses described both as self-obliterating and self-invigorating, but the moments of self-invigoration, I argue, are not evidence of a thoroughgoing subjectivity, but glimpses of a nascent, fragmentary and problematic selfhood, often kept forcibly in check by strict observance of religious routines and adherence to restrictive textual conventions for recording life events.

Those textual conventions, I claim, are best uncovered by attending – where possible – to the material texts of the various autobiographical sources I consult. From predominantly manuscript sources, I present examples of writers, for instance, using prescriptive methods such as that of financial accounting, or collecting and adapting non-original material to account for their illnesses, neither of which techniques suggests an introspective and sustained expression of selfhood in sickness.

I present chapters examining descriptions of personal illness in diaries, autobiography, letters and poetry, attending in each case to the ways in which illness and identity are written and rewritten. My evidence suggests that a sense of collectivity appears to dominate the life-writing of illness, one in which the subject is frequently defined by his or her participation in familial, social or religious networks, and in which material from other texts is collected and redeployed to account for events in an individual life. The textual frameworks examined in this thesis, I hold, are readily adaptable to accommodate and treat moments of personal crisis such as illness.

WRITING ILLNESS AND IDENTITY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

DAVID THORLEY

*A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
Department of English, Durham University, 2013*

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ABBREVIATIONS

- Alum. Cant.* J.A.Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1751*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927).
- Alum. Oxon.* Joseph Foster, ed., *Alumni Oxonienses: the Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Parker, 1891).
- Beal Peter Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, 4 vols. (London: Mansell, 1980-1993). Also available at <https://celm2.dighum.kcl.ac.uk>
- Boyle, *Corresp.* Robert Boyle, *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle: 1636–1661*, ed. Michael Hunter, Antonio Clericuzio and Lawrence Principe, 6 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001).
- Gunther R.T. Gunther, ed., *Early Science in Oxford*, 14 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923-1945).
- Munk's Roll* William Munk, *The Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London*, 2 vols. (London: Royal College of Physicians: 1861).
- Pepys Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2nd edn. 1995; repr. 2000).
- Pharm. Lond.* *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis, or, The London Dispensatory Further Adorned by the Studies and Collections of the Fellows, now Living of the Said Colledg.* (London: Cole, 1653).

Except where acknowledged, all biblical quotations are from the King James Bible.

INTRODUCTION

One morning, early in the 1660s, Robert Boyle was sitting quietly in his study. His sister and closest confidant, Katherine Jones, Viscountess Ranelagh, had visited him earlier and, since she had left, he had amused himself in the company of 'an Outlandish *Virtuoso*' who came to his home spinning humorous tales 'of the several attempts that are either made, or design'd in foreign Parts, to produce Curiosities, and improve Knowledge'.¹ When his second caller left him, Boyle was 'suddenly surpris'd with a Chilness, and a Shivering, that came so unexpected, and increas'd so fast, that it was heightened into a downright Fit of an Ague, before I could satisfie my self what it was'.²

It was an explosive onset of illness and Boyle wrote, in a series of meditations addressed to his sister, that, in the few hours since she left him, he had undergone 'so great a change in my Condition, as to be, I doubt not, already visible in my Looks'.³ The impact of his ague, Boyle felt, might have been softened if he had prepared himself through philosophical reflection on the nature of the body: 'But I confess, that this unwelcome accident had not amaz'd me, as well as troubled me, if I had sufficiently consider'd to what a strange number and variety of Distempers these frail Carcasses of ours are Obnoxious',⁴ he remarked. 'If I had call'd to mind what my

¹ Robert Boyle, *Occasional Reflections Upon Several Subiects* (London: Wilson, 1665), II, p.188.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, pp.187-188.

⁴ Ibid, p.188.

Curiosity for Dissections has shown me, and remembred how many Bones, and Muscles, and Veins, and Arteries, and Grisles, and Ligaments, and Nerves, and Membranes, and Juices, a humane Body is made up of, I could not have been surprised, that so curious an Engine, that consists of so many pieces, whose Harmony is requisite to Health, and whereof not any is superfluous, nor scarce any insensible, should have some or other of them out of order'.⁵

Jonathan Sawday observes this passage absorbing a Cartesian mechanism, Boyle thinking about his body as a set of working parts in motion. 'As the disease progressed, so Boyle conjured into his mind his knowledge and understanding of the mechanical body'.⁶ This view, as Sawday soon after acknowledges, is not sustainable for long: in fact, Boyle is berating himself for his not espousing a consistently mechanistic view of his body. *If* 'I had call'd to mind' the number of connected parts that comprise the body, he writes, *then* 'I could not have been surprised' at occasional malfunctions. As Sawday remarks, Boyle's 'triumphant overthrow of body-fear never took place. What Boyle's text offers us is an idealized view of the scientific conquest of the body. This is how one *should* feel, Boyle is saying, if the body is no more than a machine'.⁷

Boyle did not feel that way. But his case is not interesting solely because it finds one of the age's foremost natural philosophers – discoverer of the inverse

⁵ Ibid, pp.188-189.

⁶ Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.37.

⁷ Ibid. Sawday's later work argues that, in general, 'the elaborate devices of the artist-engineers of the Renaissance reached deep into early-modern political, aesthetic, and philosophical structures of thought'. He demonstrates Boyle's belief in the body as analogous to 'the 'curious engine' of the Strasbourg clock as composed out of parts which [...] 'though the numerous Wheels, and other parts of it, move several ways, and that without any thing either of Knowledge or Design; yet each performs its part in order to the various Ends for which it was contriv'd', acknowledging Boyle's belief, 'that the human being, unlike the machine, was the 'author of his actions'. Jonathan Sawday, *Engines of the Imagination: Renaissance Culture and the Rise of the Machines* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp.xviii and 290-291. See also, Robert Boyle, *Some Considerations touching the Vsefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy* (Oxford: Hall, 1663), p.71.

relationship between the volume and pressure of a gas, an arch exponent of mechanical and corpuscular thinking⁸ – neglecting to think mechanistically about his body. As well as noting that Boyle's reflections on his illness elicit a slip from the observational stance that might be expected of him, it is worth considering the frames of reference Boyle does use for thinking about himself in illness. Rather than attempting to work out which among his bones, muscles, veins, arteries, gristles, ligaments, nerves, membranes and juices was failing, and what the cause of the failure might be, Boyle meditated on the spiritual significance of his disease. Unable to sleep, he fell to comparing his lot to that of the damned, considering 'how insupportable their condition must be, to be cast into outer Darkness, where tormented Wretches lye, not as I do upon a soft Bed, but upon Fire and Brimstone, where no attendance of Servants, or kindness of Friends, is allow'd them, that need it as much as they deserve it little; and, which is worst of all, where no Beam of hope is permitted to Consolate them, as if the Day should Dawn after so Dismal a Night, though protracted to Millions of Ages, each of whose miserable hours appears an Age'.⁹ This train of thought led Boyle to a Puritan recognition of his neglected devotional duties ('How defective we are in point of Gratitude to God'). 'I now Blush', he told his sister, 'that I cannot call to Mind the time, when I ever thought that his having vouchsaf'd me the power of Sleeping, deserv'd a particular Acknowledgment'.¹⁰ Illness brought Boyle a religious lesson: 'that 'tis our

⁸ Boyle's mechanism has been the subject of debate among historians of science and philosophy. Alan Chalmers, 'The Lack of Excellency of Boyle's Mechanical Philosophy', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 24:4 (1993), 541–564 argues that Boyle's work in chemistry stood independent of his mechanical philosophy. More recently case the has been made for mechanism's centrality to Boyle's chemical endeavours. See Peter Anstey, 'Robert Boyle and the Heuristic Value of Mechanism', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 33:1 (2002), 161-174 and William Newman, *Atoms and Alchemy: Chemistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp.157-216.

⁹ Boyle, *Occasional Reflections*, p.210.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Heedlessness, not their Uselessness, that keeps us from daily being thankful for a multitude of Mercies, that we take no notice of; Though it be injurious, That that only commonness that heightens the Benefit, should keep us from being sensible of the Greatness of it'.¹¹ Illness taught him the value of spiritual self-scrutiny.

The process of correction was more profound than simply reminding Boyle of his neglected debt of gratitude to God: illness offered an analogy for his essentially sinful nature, providing a jolt to his lapsed devotional practice that was designed to have lasting effects. Boyle observed that, 'as dangerous Sickneses do for the most part leave a crasie Disposition behind them, which threatens Relapses, so Sins once prevalent, though afterwards suppress, do yet leave behind them a secret Disposition or Propensity to the Repetition of the same faults'.¹² The analogy between care of his health and of his soul, Boyle took as an incitement to practice a more consistent brand of pious self-scrutiny in the future: 'as 'tis less difficult to find examples of Bodily Diseases, than of Spiritual ones, where the Patient is protected from Relapses, so I think we should be more watchfull against falling back into the Sins, than into the Sickneses, we have once found our selves subject to, unless we would think, that a greater Danger, and of a Nobler part, deserv'd less of our care'.¹³ Was this solely an analogy? It is true that Boyle's illness and recovery provided him with a framework for thinking about his spiritual condition, but it was also, in Boyle's understanding, the first point of divine intervention and correction when he wavered in devotional consistency. Attention to the physical evidence of his body was a means by which to

¹¹ Ibid. Ralph Josselin also recognised attention to his health and gratitude for his recoveries as aspects of his Puritan duty. In 1646, he reported, 'My cold continued, but very gentle to god bee praised, an exceeding paine in my side. god good to me and my family in outward mercies, in a heart sensible of my infirmities, there is healing in my god, I see it, nay thou wilt heale me:' Ralph Josselin, *The Diary of Ralph Josselin*, ed. Alan Macfarlane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; repr. 1991), p.77.

¹² Boyle, *Occasional Reflections*, p.236.

¹³ Ibid, pp.236-237.

scrutinise his soul, and his case was by no means an exception.

This thesis begins from the observation that seventeenth-century life-writing finds relatively little use for the period's numerous and radical innovations in medical science to help make sense of personal illness. That being so, I examine diaries, autobiography, letters and poetry, investigating the ways in which personal illness is described, with attention to the implications of disordered physicality for personal identity and the uses of the material text in registering that relationship. I argue that, rather than instinctively turning to self-assertion to help understand illness, the subjects of this thesis deploy much self-effacing behaviour: they fall back on membership of family, professional and community networks; they adhere to textual conventions defined by the practices of financial accounting and social etiquette; they describe themselves according to Biblical types rather than as unique agents; they draw on a lexicon of stock phrases rather than original expressions; and, in many cases, they collect and revise existing texts rather than constructing new ones. The contexts in which these arguments need to be set are those of seventeenth-century medicine, selfhood and their interrelations.

THE MEDICAL CONTEXT

Perhaps it should not be surprising that new medicine struggled to gain traction in the imaginations of ailing people. The seventeenth-century medical profession was riven by doctrinal controversies and professional tensions and, in the 1650s, Britain saw roughly as many medical works printed as in the preceding six decades put together. Although, by the start of the century, the chemical theories of Paracelsus had become

the standard in continental medical schools, in England, only Oxford and Cambridge were licensed to train physicians, and they were slow to expand their curricula beyond Galenic principles.¹⁴ The situation in Scotland was scarcely different. Even in the late seventeenth century, Helen Dingwall observes, 'the medicine that was practised and experienced by the early-modern practitioner and patient was still essentially humoral in philosophy and in application with the addition of perhaps a wider variety of herbal and animal substances in use, and the gradual introduction of chemical compounds in the Paracelsian mode'.¹⁵

Even after William Harvey's description of circulation in 1628, Galen remained vastly popular, and new editions of his work continued to appear, although not at the frequency of the previous century when Andrew Wear, using Richard Durling's information, estimates that 'around 590 different editions of Galen were published'.¹⁶ Enthusiasm for Galen in the seventeenth century, while certainly not quenched, was perhaps dampened: the English Short Title Catalogue lists ten English editions of Galen printed between 1500 and 1599 as against six in the seventeenth century.¹⁷ Works espousing Galenism also retained currency: Thomas Elyot's *Castel of Health* (1539) reached its twelfth reprint in 1610, and Thomas Brugis's surgical

¹⁴ See Phyllis Allen, 'Medical Education in 17th Century England', *Journal of the History of Medicine & Allied Sciences*, 1:1 (1946), 115-143. Margaret Pelling has investigated the medical education available to unlicensed practitioners, arguing that many such physicians ended up practising with a greater degree of specialisation than those with orthodox training. Margaret Pelling, 'Knowledge Common and Acquired: The Education of Unlicensed Medical Practitioners in Early Modern London', in Vivian Nutton and Roy Porter, eds., *The History of Medical Education in Britain* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995), 250-279. See also, Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.138-144, which emphasises the book-centred nature of early modern medical education.

¹⁵ Helen Dingwall, *A History of Scottish Medicine: Themes and Influences* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p.74.

¹⁶ Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.35. See also, Richard Durling, 'A Chronological Census of Renaissance Editions and Translations of Galen', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 24:3/4 (1961), 230-305.

¹⁷ <http://estc.bl.uk>.

manual, *Vade Mecum*,¹⁸ received eight printings between 1651 and 1689.

But Paracelsus, who published little during his lifetime, also surged into print after his death. His *Hundred and Foureteene Experiments* (1583) was printed twice, the *Archidoxes* (1660) three times, and a raft of other texts bearing his name or professing his ideas appeared. The vastly popular apothecary Nicholas Culpeper's herbal prescriptions did much to broaden the scope of medicine, with his works receiving over 100 printings during the century. *The English Physician* (reprinted twenty four times between 1652 and 1700) and *A New Method of Physick* (1654), sought to integrate Galenic and Paracelsian medicine. Culpeper was also responsible for one of the age's most influential medical publications, the 1649 English translation of the *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis*, which made the College of Physicians' prescriptions available to London's rapidly growing population of street apothecaries.

Most vociferous in denouncing Galenic teachings were the followers of Jean Baptiste Van Helmont who developed Paracelsian chemistry into a set of principles dubbed iatrochemistry. At least twenty three volumes listing Van Helmont as author appeared in Latin, English, German and French between 1644 and 1707, while his followers and antagonists fought out a bitter rivalry in a flurry of printed treatises and ripostes. Van Helmont reached the English presses in 1662 with *Oriatrike or Physick Refined*, a systematic debunking of ancient medical wisdom, attacking medical schools that purveyed classical learning, and offering refinements to Paracelsian chemistry.

Added to this array of texts and disputes, the seventeenth century saw an

¹⁸ Thomas Brugis, *Vade Mecum: Or A Companion for a Chirurgion Fitted for Sea or Land; Peace or War* (London: B.T. and T.S., 1689).

influx of vernacular, domestic medical handbooks and works offering simple cures for the poor (often produced by Paracelsians who considered the work part of their Protestant duty).¹⁹ Recipe books also abounded,²⁰ some achieving lasting popularity, and 1665 brought a glut of treatises offering advice on treating and curing plague.²¹ Works endorsing the healing properties of one town or another's spa waters also proliferated,²² and dozens of single sheets, pamphlets and sometimes full-length works promoting patent medicines and home-brewed tonics also flooded into print.

The waters of seventeenth-century medical learning, then, raged with crosscurrents. Three examples will reinforce the point that the age's medical developments were little-referred-to in personal illness, even by those thoroughly well-versed in the subject.

i. BOYLE

Boyle's lack of interest in mechanistic thinking in the example that opened this thesis was not for want of medical learning. His relationship to seventeenth-century medicine was one of deep involvement, although its precise nature has been

¹⁹ See for example, Nicholas Culpeper, *Health for the Rich and Poor; by Dyet without Physick* (London: Cole, 1656), John Archer, *Every Man his own Doctor* (London: s.n., 1671) and George Hartman, *The True Preserver and Restorer of Health* (London: T.B., 1682). For overviews of early modern vernacular medical texts, see Paul Slack, 'Mirrors of Health and Treasures of Poor Men: the Uses of the Vernacular Medical Literature of Tudor England', in Charles Webster, ed., *Health, Medicine, and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 237-73, and Wear, (2000), pp.40-45.

²⁰ See for example, Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent, *A Choice Manuall, or Rare and Select Secrets in Physick and Chyrurgery* (London: Norton, 1653), which went through multiple editions during the seventeenth century, and Hannah Woolley, *The Accomplish'd Lady's Delight in Preserving, Physick, Beautifying, and Cookery* (London: Harris, 1675).

²¹ See for example, Gideon Harvey, *A Discourse of the Plague Containing the Nature, Causes, Signs, and Presages of the Pestilence in General* (London: Brooke, 1665), George Thomson, *Loimologia* (London: Chapman, 1665), and William Simpson, *Zenexton Ante-pestilentiale* (London: Sawbridge, 1665).

²² See for example, Nehemiah Grew, *A Treatise of the Nature and Use of the Bitter Purging Salt Contain'd in Epsom* (London: s.n., 1697), William Simpson, *A Discourse of the Sulphur-bath at Knarsbrough in Yorkshire* (London: Cooper, 1675) and Robert Witte, *Scarborough Spaw* (York: Lambert, 1660).

disputed.²³ His *Considerations Touching the Vsefulness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy* contains a mass of medical information both theoretical and practical, including arguments about dissecting practices and chemical theories, along with numerous recipes, giving particular attention to three new medical preparations: spirit of hartshorn, balsam of sulphur and *ens veneris*. Michael Hunter characterises Boyle, in this work, as a medical pluralist, arguing that 'he went out of his way to *supplement* existing knowledge and practice, not to replace it'.²⁴

If the *Considerations* took a non-doctrinal approach, another treatise, printed in 1685, argued more concertedly for *the Reconcilableness of Specifick Medicines to the Corpuscular Philosophy*, putting the case for chemical rather than humoral healing. 'A Specifick' (a remedy designed to act upon particular ailments or parts of the body), Boyle argued, was able to 'get through the Pores into the Recesses of this stubborn matter' and to 'dissolve and ruine the texture of the Morbifick matter'.²⁵ Overall, Hunter challenges the conventional portrait of a conciliatory Boyle who took an even-handed view of debates between old and new medicine, drawing attention to an iconoclastic treatise – conceived as a sequel to the *Considerations* – that Boyle suppressed but which survives in two manuscript fragments.²⁶ In it, Boyle complained about the imperfections of establishment Galenists, weighing, for

²³ The territory of Boyle's medical thought has been thoroughly covered. See G.W. Jones, 'Robert Boyle as a Medical Man', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 38 (1964), 139-52, L.S. King, *The Road to Medical Enlightenment* (London: Macdonald, 1970), Robert Frank, *Harvey and the Oxford Physiologists: A Study of Scientific Ideas and Social Interaction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980) and Barbara Kaplan, *Divulging of Useful Truths in Physick: The Medical Agenda of Robert Boyle* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

²⁴ Michael Hunter *Robert Boyle (1627-91): Scrupulosity and Science* (Melton: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), p.161.

²⁵ Robert Boyle, *Of the Reconcilableness of Specifick Medicines to the Corpuscular Philosophy* (London: Smith, 1685), p.36.

²⁶ Hunter (2000), pp.157-186. Hunter is particularly elaborating on the arguments of Kaplan (1993). The unpublished treatise in question is held at Royal Society, RB/1/18, ff.48v and 133-4, and RB/2/30/20.

example, into the debate between orthodox and reforming physicians about the medical value of bloodletting with the view that, 'here in Europe the most part of the Chymists of differing Sects agree in this, that the Blood is the Balsom of Life, & that 'tis dangerous to deprive a Patient of it, unless perhaps in some extraordinary & very urgent Cases'.²⁷ The evidence of that work implies that, privately, Boyle was a more passionate advocate for medicine from the chemical school than he felt able to reveal in public.²⁸ For my purposes, it is important to note that Boyle's knowledge of cutting-edge medical theory was not called on to help him make sense of the ague he recorded in his meditations.

ii. HOOKE

Robert Hooke was similarly immersed in medical learning, with medical texts accounting for at least ten per cent of his 3,000-book library.²⁹ Hooke owned medical works by Harvey, Boyle, Thomas Willis and Richard Lower, as well as texts by Galen, Paracelsus and both Jean Baptiste Van Helmont and his son, Francis Mercury Van Helmont. He also owned several pharmacopoeias in Latin, French and English, though only one copy of the *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis* and no text by the much-reprinted Culpeper.

But neither did Hooke, in illness, turn to the experimental physicians of Oxford and the Royal Society. His diary reveals much use of herbal remedies and street medicines. Suffering from headache, he did not consult a learned physician of

²⁷ Royal Society, RB/2/30/20.

²⁸ Boyle's library was summarily dispersed after his death, but a study of his citations has demonstrated his engagement with medical texts old and new, including works by Galen, Paracelsus and Van Helmont. See H. A. Feisenberger, 'The Libraries of Newton, Hooke and Boyle', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, 21:1 (1966), 42- 55, pp.52-55 and Iordan Avramov, Michael Hunter and Hideyuki Yoshimoto, *Boyle's Books: the Evidence of His Citations* (London: Robert Boyle Project, 2010).

²⁹ See *Bibliotheca Hookiana: Sive Catalogus Diversorum Librorum* (London: Millington, 1703).

his acquaintance, but travelled 'To Bell in Stroud to inquire after one Fuller that pretends to cure the Senses'.³⁰ An eight-page pamphlet advertising a patent medicine called 'Elixir magnum vitae' was in circulation in the 1670s, boasting that the prescription is 'very prevalent against all inveterate pains of the Head, and defends the Brain from all noxious Fumes that arise from a foul Stomach'.³¹ It also mentions, in its list of London distributors, a 'Mrs. Fuller, at the lower end of Brook-street, at the Sign of the Two Perukes and Crown in Ratcliff'. This does not account for Hooke's journey 'To Bell in Stroud'³² but the entry does imply an inclination towards popular medicines. In 1673, Hooke took the herbal remedy Elecampane³³ for giddiness, but found himself suffering 'hypochondriacall wind, very violent'³⁴ and changed his treatment: 'I presently eat panada. and sipd *aqua vita*. [...] took mountebanks drink 1 spoonfull'.³⁵ He also made frequent use of vomits, a practice grounded in purgative Galenic medicine, but which had also entered the repertoire of more modern physicians. In 1674, he noted having taken 'Dr Thomsons vomit' with the result that 'It vomited twice. Purged 10 or 12 times'.³⁶ Presumably Dr Thomson is

³⁰ Robert Hooke, *The Diary of Robert Hooke 1672-1680*, ed. Henry Robinson and Walter Adams (London: Taylor and Francis, 1935), p.179. Hooke's library catalogue is also printed in Leona Rostenberg, *The Library of Robert Hooke: The Scientific Book Trade of Restoration England* (Santa Monica, CA: Modoc, 1989), pp.143-221.

³¹ *Elixir Magnum Vitae: or, the Great Elixir of Life, being the Most Admirable Cordial-Drink* (London: s.n., 1670-80), p.2.

³² 'Stroud' probably refers to the Strand. Patrick Wallis explains that 'by the 1640s apothecaries were already established along the main thoroughfares to the west of the city which ran towards Westminster'. Patrick Wallis, 'Apothecaries and the Consumption and Retailing of Medicines in Early Modern London', in Louis Hill Curth, ed., *From Physick to Pharmacology: Five Hundred Years of British Drug Retailing* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2006), 13-28, p.24. Pepys reports visiting a tavern called 'the Bells at the maypole in the Strand' in June 1661. Pepys, II, p.127. John Stow refers to, 'This part of the *Strand* in this Parish, which begins on the North side of *Bell Inn*, being a Through-fare into *Wab Street*; and in a place of great Resort for Horses, Coaches and Wagons'. John Stow, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, rev. ed. John Strype, 2 vols. (London: Churchill, 1720), II, p.112.

³³ Culpeper's translation of the Royal College's London dispensatory describes Elecampane as 'hot and dry in the third degree, wholsom for the stomach, resists poyson, helps old Coughs and shortness of breath, helps Ruptures and provokes lust'. *Pharm. Lond.*, p.6.

³⁴ Hooke, *Diary*, p.25.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid, p.99.

the Helmontian George Thomson, who railed against Galenist prescriptions, but also advocated the 'Emeto-Diaphoretick' and the 'Emeto-Cathartick'.³⁷ The same year, Hooke 'Took vomit', which 'wrough little', but 'fetcht up tough fermenting flegme by feather'.³⁸ Six days later, he reported, 'Bought two vomits, one of Whitchcot, of Child 7d'.³⁹ The day after that, the diary records, 'Took Childs vomit, Infusion *Croc. Met.* 3i. Wrought pretty well.'⁴⁰

iii. PEPYS

Finally, Pepys amassed a large personal library, acquiring a moderate collection of medical books, including six anatomical works.⁴¹ Although he owned no copy of Harvey, he did, acquire a two-volume set of the Dutch microbiologist Antonie van Leeuwenhoek's *Anatomia*, and continued collecting anatomical books until late in life.⁴² Elsewhere, Pepys's medical reading suggests practicality: having undergone surgery for kidney stones in 1658, he owned several treatises on stone, two by the Dutch physician Johannes Groenevelt,⁴³ another by the German surgeon Wilhelm Fabricus Hildanus,⁴⁴ and Sydenham's *Tractatus de Podagra et Hydrope*.⁴⁵

Pepys was acquainted with the dispute between chemical and classical medicine. In November 1663, he was present during 'a long and most passionate discourse between two doctors of physique, of which one was Dr. Allen, whom I

³⁷ George Thomson, *Galeno-pale, or, A Chymical Trial of the Galenists* (London: Wood, 1665), p.110.

³⁸ Hooke, *Diary*, p.104.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p.105.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*. 3 = Ounce. Astrological and chemical symbols are listed in Appendix I.

⁴¹ See C.S. Knighton, ed., *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College Cambridge: Supplementary Series Volume 1: Census of Printed Books* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004).

⁴² He owned William Cowper's *Anatomy of Human Bodies* (1699), published four years before his death. See Knighton, *Catalogue*, p.282.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p.32 and p.119.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p.62.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p.94.

knew at Cambridge, and a Couple of Apothecarys; these maintaining Chymistry against their Galenicall physic'.⁴⁶ Although he knew Allen, Pepys seems to have been seduced, if not quite persuaded, by the apothecaries' case, recording that one of them, 'did speak very prettily; that is, his language and sense good, though perhaps he might not be so knowing a physician as to offer to contest with them'.⁴⁷

He also attended anatomical lectures. In 1663, at the Barber-Surgeons' Company, he heard a lecture 'upon the Kidneys, Ureters, and yard' by Christopher Terne, whose manuscript orations are preserved in the British Library.⁴⁸ On the same occasion, he met Charles Scarborough (Harvey's successor as Lumleian lecturer at the College of Physicians), accompanying a party of Scarborough's friends to view the body on which Terne had lectured. Afterwards, they withdrew to a private room where Pepys quizzed Scarborough on diseases of the stone.⁴⁹

Pepys subscribed to the Galenic principle of heat and cold inhering in particular foods. In 1663, he experienced 'a little pain by drinking of cold small beer today, and being in a cold room at the Taverne'.⁵⁰ The same year, Pepys went 'to Mr. Hollyard, and took some pills of him, and a note under his hand to drink wine with my beere; without which I was obliged, by my private vowe to drink none a good while, and have strictly observed it. And by my drinking of small-beer and not eating, I am so mightily troubled with wind that I know not what to do almost'.⁵¹ The addition of wine to weak beer was made to protect Pepys from the cooling nature of

⁴⁶ Pepys, IV, pp.361-362. 'Dr. Allen' is Thomas Allen, a fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge between 1651 and 1660, later physician to Bedlam Hospital. See *Munk's Roll*, I, p.361. He was satirised by James Carkesse in his verse account of his time in the Finsbury and Bedlam asylums, *Lucida Intervals* (London: s.n., 1679).

⁴⁷ Pepys, IV, p.362.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.59. For Terne's orations, see BL, MS. Sloane 1903.

⁴⁹ Pepys, IV, p.60.

⁵⁰ Ibid, IV, p.386.

⁵¹ Ibid, IV, p.280.

that drink.

That it was the surgeon, Thomas Hollier, to whom Pepys turned for medical advice, rather than one of the more eminent physicians of his acquaintance, implies a desire for practical healing (a preference for the curative practice of “medicine” rather than the holistic practice of “physic”, to use Harold Cook's distinction).⁵² An apprentice, rather than a university man, Hollier came with strong references, Boyle calling him 'that excellent lithotomist'.⁵³ Elizabeth Lane Furdell argues that, in the second half of the seventeenth century, 'surgeons were still coupled in the minds of those who needed relief from sundry maladies with the skills and bedside manner that we would compare with the modern general practitioner or primary care physician'. For Pepys, she says, Hollier was 'the ideal general practitioner'.⁵⁴ Pepys and Hollier shared a belief in therapeutic bloodletting. Having been bled in May 1662, Pepys reports vomiting, 'but lying upon my back, I was presently well again and did give him 5s. for his pains'.⁵⁵ Nor was Pepys immune to superstition, once making note of being 'now mighty well; and truly, I cannot but impute it to my fresh Hare's-Foote'.⁵⁶

Pepys maintained traces of Galenism in his thinking about kidney stones. On the fifth anniversary of his operation, he wrote, 'only, now and then upon taking cold I have some pain, but otherwise in very good health always'.⁵⁷ Tellingly, Pepys's edition of Skelton's extensive verse collection, *Pithy, Pleasant and Profitable*

⁵² Harold Cook, 'The New Philosophy and Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England,' in David Lindberg and Robert Westman, eds., *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 397-436, p.400.

⁵³ Boyle, *Some Considerations*, p. 72. For Hollier, see G.C.R. Morris, 'A Portrait of Thomas Hollier, Pepys's Surgeon', *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England*, 6:1 (1979), 224-229, p.224.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Lane Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine in Early Modern England* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2002), p.21.

⁵⁵ Pepys, II, pp.76-77.

⁵⁶ Ibid, VI, p.18.

⁵⁷ Ibid, IV, p.86.

Workes, is bound with a service book inscribed with the explanation that it was meant for use during the sweating sickness.⁵⁸ despite Pepys's interest in experimental medicine, he held to devotional habits at times of personal illness.

EMERGENT SELVES

Personal identity, that is to say the idea of “the self”, appears in the seventeenth century as a nascent and troublesomely ambiguous proposition. The endlessly recited first principle of Descartes, '*I am thinking therefore I exist*',⁵⁹ gave explicit formulation to the division of inner self from outer, a contrast that Descartes clarified in the sentences immediately following his famous maxim. His next reflection is, 'while I could pretend that I had no body and that there was no world and no place for me to be in, I could not for all that pretend that I did not exist'.⁶⁰ Descartes published his *Discourse on Method*, which gave first airing to the tag, in 1637, some thirty-eight years after the appearance of John Davies's poem *Nosce Teipsum*, which declared, 'My selfe am *Center* of my circling thought, / Onely *my selfe* I studie, learne, and know'.⁶¹ While Davies, reached an ambiguous conclusion about the merits of self knowledge,⁶² Montaigne, in the 1580s, had been insistent about the need for first-principles epistemology, and set about asking himself: '*What do I know?*'⁶³ After his death in 1592, Montaigne's work continued to flourish, not least in England, where John Florio's translation of the *Essays* was printed in 1603, 1613,

⁵⁸ Knighton, I, p.15.

⁵⁹ René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, ed. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), I, p.126.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ John Davies, *Nosce Teipsum: This Oracle Expounded in Two Elegies* (London: Standish, 1599), p.8.

⁶² He concluded, 'I know my selfe a Man, / Which is a proud and yet a wretched thing' (ibid), advising, 'Cast downe thy selfe, and onely striue to raise / The glorie of thy Makers sacred name'. Ibid, p.101.

⁶³ Michel de Montaigne, *Essays of Michael, Seigneur de Montaigne in Three Books*, trans. Charles Cotton (London: Basset, 1685), p.339.

and 1636. The seventeenth century's middle decades saw a decline in the English presses' interest in the work, but a new translation by Charles Cotton in 1685 earned reprintings in 1693 and 1700. Montaigne was an exemplary practitioner of self-scrutiny, retiring from public office in 1518 to allow his mind 'full leisure to entertain and divert it self'.⁶⁴ But, rather than behaving in a manner consistent with his settled maturity, Montaigne found that his mind ran wild, reporting, 'it is like a Horse that has broke from his Rider, who voluntarily runs into a much more violent Career than any Horseman would put him to, and creates me so many Chimaera's and fantastick Monsters one upon another, without Order or Design, that, the better at leisure to contemplate their Strangeness and Absurdity, I have begun to commit them to Writing, hoping in time to make them asham'd of themselves'.⁶⁵ The *Essays* then appears as a record of Montaigne's self-scrutiny and a written attempt at self-correction and constraint.

A source of encouragement in his endeavours was the developing vogue for biographical writing. Peter Burke observes that, 'Outside Italy, few biographies were written before the sixteenth century, but then the trickle turned into a flood'.⁶⁶ In addition to the biographies of Dürer, Erasmus, Calvin, Thomas More, Cardinal Wolsey and Philip Sidney that Burke lists as being published in the first six decades of the sixteenth century, he also notes, 'the popularity of the French and English translations of Plutarch's *Lives* is another sign of the interest in intimate biographical details', adding that 'Plutarch was one of Montaigne's favourite authors precisely because his biographies dealt with private as well as public affairs, with the inner as

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.48.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.49.

⁶⁶ Peter Burke, 'Representations of the Self from Petrarch to Descartes', in Roy Porter, ed., *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1997), 17-28, p.21.

well as the outer life of his subjects'.⁶⁷ In Italy, meanwhile, the sculptor and goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini was writing his autobiography during the 1550s and 60s, though it did not appear in print until 1728.⁶⁸

Fascination with lives and their details continued to develop into the seventeenth century, but such minute personal scrutiny was not welcomed universally or without complication. On reading Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, Kenelm Digby complained, 'What should I say of his making so particular a Narration of personal things, and private thoughts of his own; the knowledge whereof cannot much conduce to any man's betterment?'⁶⁹

One explanation for the developing trend of autobiographical writing in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Burke suggests, is the period's explosion of printing. He argues that the sixteenth century was 'the first century in which print became a part of everyday life',⁷⁰ pointing out that the period saw the popularisation not only of autobiography and journal writing, but also of 'fictional narratives in the first-person story, such as the picaresque novel in Spain or the sonnet-sequences of Sidney, Shakespeare and others'. For Burke, 'These examples suggest the importance of the diffusion of printed models for the creation of a new or sharper sense of self, as well as the breakdown of inhibitions about writing down the story of one's life'.⁷¹

The popularity of Donne's *Devotions* testifies to a relationship between the spread of printed material and the habit of self-scrutiny. The text, which consists of systematic, pious reflections on the various stages of a critical illness, was probably

⁶⁷ Burke, 'Representations of the Self', p.21.

⁶⁸ Benvenuto Cellini, *Vita di Benvenuto Cellini* (Naples: Martello, 1728).

⁶⁹ Kenelm Digby, *Observations on Religio Medici* (London: Crook, 1669), p.331.

⁷⁰ Burke, 'Representations of the Self', p.22.

⁷¹ Ibid.

conceived during the illness and revised in convalescence before publication in 1624.⁷² Between then and Donne's death, seven years later, the work went through three editions, receiving further printings in 1634 and 1638. In that work, Donne prays, 'Let thy mercifull prouidence so gouerne all in this sicknesse, that I neuer fall into vtter darknesse, ignorance of thee, or inconsideration of my selfe'.⁷³ And, appearing to foreshadow the meditative text he produced following his ague, Boyle, in 1663, offered a spiritual justification of physical self-scrutiny: 'it seems to me not onely highly dishonorable for a Reasonable Soul to live in so Divinely built a Mansion, as the Body she resides in, altogether unacquainted with the exquisite Structure of it; but I am confident, it is a great obstacle to our rendring God the Praises due to him, for his having so excellently lodg'd us, that we are so ignorant of the curious Workmanship of the Mansions our Souls live in'.⁷⁴

Boyle's pronouncement seems of a piece with poetic accounts of the soul being contained (trapped in a number of versions) inside the body.⁷⁵ As the century progressed, experience – including the experience of being in the body – became critical to the understanding of individual identity. In 1690, Locke, reflecting on

⁷² In a letter to Robert Ker, Donne explained that he had revised the devotions shortly after his sickness had abated: 'Though I have left my bed, I have not left my bed-side; I sit there still, and as a Prisoner discharged, sits at the Prison doore, to beg Fees, so sit I here, to gather crummes. I have used this leisure, to put the meditations had in my sicknesse, into some such order, as may minister some holy delight'. John Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour* (London: Marriot, 1651), p.249. In another letter, Donne describes his devotional practice in illness, which mirrors the structure of the *Devotions*: '...by meditating, by expostulating, by praying; for, since I am barred of my ordinarie diet, which is Reading, I make these my exercises, which is another part of Physick'. Toby Matthew, *A Collection of Letters, Made by Sr Tobie Mathews Kt* (London: Herringman, 1660), pp.302-303. For a summary of the evidence about *Devotions*' composition and publication, see *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. Anthony Raspa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp.xvii-xviii.

⁷³ John Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions and Seuerall Steps in my Sicknes* (London: Jones, 1624), p.363.

⁷⁴ Boyle, *Some Considerations*, p.97.

⁷⁵ Most famously, Marvell's 'Dialogue between the Soul and Body' asks, 'O Who shall, from this Dungeon, raise / A Soul inslav'd so many wayes?' Andrew Marvell, *Miscellaneous Poems by Andrew Marvell Esq* (London: Boutler, 1681), p.12. William Prynne's 'The Soul's Complaint against the Bodies Encroachment on Her' also has the soul speaking of its body as 'Rebell Slave' which 'dethrones me quite'. William Prynne, *Mount-Orgueil* (London: Cotes, 1641), p.178.

identity as 'a native Impression', asked, 'Whether a Man, being a Creature, consisting of Soul and Body, be the same Man, when his Body is changed?'⁷⁶ The answer is complicated; Locke's natural inclination is to uphold the separation of soul and body. 'For, I suppose, no body will make Identity of persons, to consist in the Soul's being united to the very same numerical particles of matter: For if that be necessary to Identity, 'twill be impossible, in that constant flux of the particles of our Bodies, that any Man should be the same person, two days, or two moments together',⁷⁷ he reasons. But, at the same time, he admits that physical sensation has a definitive part to play in constructing identity: 'For if we take wholly away all Consciousness of our Actions and Sensations, especially of Pleasure and Pain, and the concernment that accompanies it, it will be hard to know wherein to place personal Identity'.⁷⁸

SUSPICIOUS SELVES

Even by the time of Locke's *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, no clear distinction between body and self had emerged. In fact, much recent scholarship has set itself to debunking the Burckhardtian myth of a reflexive Renaissance self that emerged, fully formed, at some point during the Tudor age.⁷⁹ Two points arising from this work have importance for my discussions. First, seventeenth-century selfhood should not necessarily be seen as a personal and psychological condition; it has, in fact, been characterised as a material and social one. Second, the types of self-

⁷⁶ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London: Basset, 1690), pp.27-28.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.41.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p.40.

⁷⁹ See Jason Scott Warren, *Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), pp.223-246, Gene Brucker, 'The Italian Renaissance' in Guido Ruggiero, ed., *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 21-38, John Jeffries Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), Andrew Cambers, *Godly Reading: Print, Manuscript and Puritanism in England, 1580-1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.255-7, Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.54 and 209-216, and Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski, *Group Identity in the Renaissance World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

scrutiny (especially Protestant self-scrutiny) with which I will be dealing often carry as a core assumption a fundamental scepticism about personal agency: selfhood is not a vibrant and uplifting experience to be revelled in, but a dark, ungodly impulse that ought necessarily to be suppressed.

The first point requires the more expansive contextualising. In 1996, a collection of essays under the title *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* sought to revise the assumption, inherited from Burckhardt, that, in the early modern period, 'It is only after the subject emerges in its individuality that it puts itself in relation to objects'.⁸⁰ Margareta de Grazia's contribution to the collection presents evidence of the treatment of material possessions in *King Lear* to illustrate her argument that 'removing what a person *has* simultaneously takes away what a person *is*'.⁸¹ Evidence in Michael MacDonald's work on early modern insanity helps bolster the claim.⁸² MacDonald gives several examples in which destruction of personal property is tantamount to self-destruction, quoting various instances of madmen smashing windows in their luxurious houses. In one example, Edmund Francklin, 'a man of great worth', was visited in his madness by John Spencer:

we found him in a great chamber the glasse windows broken down, and one chaire, another afterwards was brought, we sate down, my intention being at this time onely to observe his carriage, he was in a slight suit, hardly worth five shillings, like Irish trouses, without a band, the haire of his head on both sides being rubbed off, and standing with his back to a great fire, and looking so terribly, that he would have terrified a man that was not acquainted with furious obiects.⁸³

'Clear glass', MacDonald explains, 'was very costly and especially valued during this

⁸⁰ 'Introduction' in Margareta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass, eds., *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-13, p.3.

⁸¹ Margareta de Grazia, 'The Ideology of Superfluous Things: King Lear as Period Piece', in *ibid*, 18-42, p.21.

⁸² See Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp.128-132.

⁸³ John Spencer, *A Discovrse of Divers Petitions of High Concernment and Great Consequence* (London: Dudley, 1641), pp.75-76.

period as a mark of the prosperity of households climbing up a social ladder'.⁸⁴ Franklin, by destroying his home and dishevelled his dress, was attempting to demolish his inherited identity as man of worth and a household head.⁸⁵

These challenges to anachronistic impositions of psychological selfhood have led scholars to revisit commonplace assumptions about early modern life-writing and self-expression. Adam Smyth's view is that 'early modern life-writers, while certainly sometimes sketching what might plausibly be called interiority or inwardness, also constructed selfhood through a process of identifying, even overlapping, with other figures, narratives, and events, and by looking out into the world, rather than within. The sense of identity implied by, for example, financial accounts is constructed through objects and possessions'.⁸⁶ Smyth's study investigates what he regards as the characteristic 'unfixity' of early modern autobiographical texts, investigating lives written in financial account books, almanacs, commonplace books and parish registers. Financial accounting, a practice whose methods also loom large in my study, represents an obvious example of a methodology that assumes a connection between personal wealth and identity, but, in fact, in each of the types of text that Smyth examines, the urge to scrutinise and record the self using the framework of a pre-existing model (recorded time in the case of almanacs, quotations and exemplars in the case of commonplace books, and skeletal life histories in the case of parish registers) constrains the individual agency of the writer, rather than enabling reflection on his or her rich interiority.

Smyth's work follows that of Mark Dawson, who provides a useful working

⁸⁴ MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p.129.

⁸⁵ See Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1470-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp.42-48, on male and female domestic roles and property distribution.

⁸⁶ Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, p.11.

example of this limited sense of subjectivity in Pepys's diary. The entry for 29 November 1663, in which Pepys describes putting on 'my best black cloth-suit trimmed with Scarlett ribbon, very neat, with my cloak lined with Velvett and a new Beaver, which altogether is very noble, with my black silk knit canons I bought a month ago',⁸⁷ has been taken by many readers for an example of vanity. Dawson, on the other hand, argues that, in context, Pepys's behaviour – noting the cut of his clothes and their date of purchase; and, significantly, travelling to church alone, having struck his wife and blackened her eye the day before – can be convincingly interpreted as taking a register of his social standing in the community following that incident, rather than evidence of narcissism.⁸⁸

Anne Clifford, who also had the habit of recording her dress in her diary, dedicated a significant portion of her life to tenaciously pursuing what she regarded as her rightful inheritance after her father bequeathed his estates to her brother. Ultimately, she was successful but the process was tortuous, with Clifford benighted by public disapprobation and a husband who squandered her money. In the throes of the dispute, in 1616, Clifford wrote in her diary, 'I stay'd in the Country having many times a sorrowfull & heavy heart, and being condemn'd by most folks because I would not consent to the agreements, so as I may truly say I am like an owl in the Desert'.⁸⁹ The dispute left Clifford ambiguously stationed, disconnected both from the property to which she considered herself entitled and the social circle in which she was striving for position. In this condition, however, her recourse was not to an original expression of her emotional state, but to the psalms, employed as a model

⁸⁷ Pepys, IV, p.400.

⁸⁸ See Mark Dawson, 'Histories and Texts: Refiguring the Diary of Samuel Pepys', *The Historical Journal*, 43:2 (2000), 407-431, pp.245-247.

⁸⁹ Anne Clifford, *The Diary of Anne Clifford 1616-1619*, ed. Katherine Acheson (New York: Garland, 1995), p.48.

for piety in affliction. Psalm 102, which styles itself 'A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD', proclaims, 'I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert'. Clifford's recourse is to a practical act of devotion rather than a descriptive one of self-expression. Following the eventual success of her campaign, she retired to an austere widowhood, asserting control of her properties through detailed and multi-tiered household inventories and account books (often assembled by members of her staff and bearing her endorsement).⁹⁰

The second point about early modern selfhood is that, even where subjectivity does appear, it is often viewed with deep suspicion as self-aggrandising and irreligious. Examples of self-scepticism will recur throughout this thesis, and I will only quote a selection here. Puritans at the more radical end of the spectrum were encouraged to be positively fanatical in their self-scrutiny (Ralph Josselin, who I will discuss in greater detail later, believed his suppurating navel was a divine 'correction', praying, 'oh purge out that corrupcion thou doest discover in mee'),⁹¹ but radical and orthodox theology alike continued to regard selfhood as a harmful distraction from devotional piety. In his final sermon, the non-conforming minister Richard Manton, urged both the necessity of self-scrutiny and the dangers of selfhood, advising, 'Watch over thy self with a holy suspicion, because thou hast sin within thee that doth easily beset thee; therefore *consider thy wayes*, Psal. 119 59. *Guard thy senses*. Job. 31.1. but above all, *keep thy heart*, Prov. 4.23. Conscience must stand Porter at the door, and examine what comes in and what goes out: watch over the strategems of Satan, and seducing motions of thy own heart'.⁹²

⁹⁰ For more on this see Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, pp.74-89.

⁹¹ Josselin, *Diary*, p.159.

⁹² Edward Calamy, ed., *A Compleat Collection of Farewel Sermons* (London: s.n., 1663), sig.D2r.

This example comes from the devout Puritan wing of the church, but such suspicion of selfhood was by no means the province of radicalism alone. Donne, certainly no Calvinist, shared with his Puritan counterparts a wish to subjugate his interior self to God's control. His tenth Holy Sonnet pleads with God, 'Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I / Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free'.⁹³ And his 'Anatomy of the World' bemoans the fact that 'every man alone thinkes he hath got / To be a Phoenix, and that then can bee / None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee'.⁹⁴

AILING SELVES

If subjectivity may have been less evident in the construal of selfhood than is sometimes assumed, critical attention has rightly been given to (mostly humoral) physiology and its role in the construction of early modern identities. Gail Kern Paster's influential study of bodily shame in early modern drama laid much of the grounding for thinking about embodiment during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, arguing for the centrality of humoral theory: 'in early modern Europe, despite the challenges to Galenism posed in the sixteenth century by Paracelsus and his followers, the dominant physiological paradigm was the classical theory of the four humors upon which ancient biology and hence the practice of medicine were based for centuries'.⁹⁵ Additionally, Paster's argument established bodily experience, especially that of the humoral body, as a locus of unmediated truth: 'The body is materially at the center of "what is lived as true."' But the operations of ideology upon the body may be even harder to detect than the operations of ideology upon emerging subjectivity because we experience our bodies as natural and because we

⁹³ John Donne, *Poems, by J.D. with Elegies on the Authors Death* (London: Marriot, 1633), p.38.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.242.

⁹⁵ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), p.2.

experience them as belonging to us – we “proprio-percept” them – *all the time*. Often what goes on within the body “goes without saying” because it goes on daily, habitually, involuntarily, and universally; in this respect, bodiliness is the most rudimentary form of self-presence. Hence it seems to fall beneath the threshold of significance into the domain of the *merely* natural'.⁹⁶

Michael Schoenfeldt's account of 'Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton' also gives central place to humoral theory, emphasising the materiality of mental as well as bodily experience, arguing that 'the Galenic regime of the humoral self that supplies these writers with much of their vocabulary of inwardness demanded the invasion of social and psychological realms by biological and environmental processes'.⁹⁷

But critical accounts of the body in early modern culture that treat humoral theory as an all-consuming ideology to which no alternative was available have been subject to refinements. Margaret Healy expresses anxiety about models which either give too much credence to a supposed switch from humoral to mechanistic thinking or neglect the available alternatives to Galenic humoralism. 'Critics', she writes 'have, in my view, placed too much emphasis on a standard Galenic model of the body, or one that shifted drastically to a Vesalian or Paracelsan paradigm in the early seventeenth century'.⁹⁸ 'General understanding of the body was not limited to one clearly defined paradigm', says Healy, 'but was far more diverse, idiosyncratic and unstable: in fact, there was not one model of the body in this period, but a slightly bewildering range'.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid, pp.4-5.

⁹⁷ Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.8.

⁹⁸ Margaret Healy, *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues and Politics* (London: Palgrave, 2001), p.6.

⁹⁹ Ibid, pp.6-7.

David Hillman likewise challenges accounts of the early modern body that overstate the pervasiveness of humoral theory, noting that 'what is sometimes lost in this attempt to re-ground mental and emotional activity in the materiality of the body is the instability of the relation, the fact that pre-Cartesian belief structures of earlier periods were already beginning to clash with radical new efforts to separate the vocabulary of medical and humoral physiology from that of individual psychology'.¹⁰⁰

These caveats issued, however, both Healy and Hillman offer descriptions of the body in which humoral theory remains powerfully dominant. Healy's, she says, is an 'embodied approach',¹⁰¹ and so too is Hillman's. He argues that Montaigne's book of essays sets out '[to] wholly set forth and expose my selfe: It is a *Sceletos*; where at first sight appeare all the vaines, muskles, gristles, sinnewes, and tendons, each severall part in his due place [...] I write not my gests, but my selfe and my essence'. It becomes clear, as one reads the essays that Montaigne is thinking of this 'essence' as not just a metaphorical but a physical interior, and indeed subjectivity and entrails were often spoken of as one and the same throughout the period'.¹⁰²

The relevance of this work on 'embodiment' for my research is that Galenic physiology offers an influential set of criteria for describing identity, but – as Healy and Hillman have noted – it is one whose dominance is, during the seventeenth century, in the process of being renegotiated if not entirely replaced. Disordered Galenic bodies entail disordered selves, and my task is to examine the ways in which the available textual frameworks for transcribing lives were able to accommodate the changeable materials provided by illness and identity.

¹⁰⁰ David Hillman, *Shakespeare's Entrails: Belief, Scepticism and the Interior of the Body* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.4.

¹⁰¹ Healy, *Fictions of Disease*, p.16.

¹⁰² Hillman, *Shakespeare's Entrails*, p.18.

ILLNESS AND LIFE-WRITING

To summarise the argument so far: during the seventeenth century, a mass of new medical knowledge emerged which was, at best, only partially taken up by life-writers in describing their illnesses. Intellectual traditions of self-scrutiny, bolstered by a print culture that enabled the mass production of biographies and the circulation of works by Descartes and Montaigne, encouraged a type of self-reflection that earlier ages had apparently seldom practiced. But – and the qualification is a substantial one – the importance of this self-scrutiny has been vastly overstated, and, in fact, much evidence of identity continuing to be construed according to material and social criteria has been produced. Additionally, scholars of early modern 'embodiment' have shown the continuing influence of humoral physiology and the importance of the body to the construction of identity.

The picture that emerges is of a nascent subjectivity, discernible in fragmentary glimpses, with identity more often written according to established frameworks than with reference to individual subjectivity. Guidelines for recording life events circulated widely in print in the forms of manuals for keeping financial accounts and handbooks for writing spiritual diaries, composing letters and keeping commonplace books. Often, the significance of the individual was played down in religious life, with devotional behaviour focused on collective rather than personal experience. The view that seventeenth-century diaries or devotional texts should be considered inherently private works has been challenged,¹⁰³ and recent work by Andrew Cambers has attended to collective, rather than private, devotional reading

¹⁰³ See Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp.33-35, Dawson, 'Histories and Texts' and Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, pp.79-82.

practices among Puritan communities.¹⁰⁴

The pervasiveness of what Brian Vickers has called the early modern 'notebook culture' is the final piece of context in which to situate the methodology of this thesis.¹⁰⁵ The humanist 'notebook method' of collecting quotations, recipes, advice and other information is exemplified by personal commonplace books, but its techniques, conventions and assumptions tend to bleed into other types of personal notebook. Nigel Smith describes Civil War political writing as 'the multiple capturing in words of the same events', throwing up 'many different narratives and the repetition of those textual simultaneities over and over again for successive events'.¹⁰⁶ Adam Smyth argues that this model of writing and revision applies equally to personal diaries (especially those with a basis in financial accounting).¹⁰⁷ With the idea of the diary as a sustained narrative of individual interiority destabilised, the most effective way to examine descriptions of illness in context is to return to the notebooks in which these cultural practices of compilation and rewriting were enacted. In the case of illness, I will advance evidence of writers adapting episodes of poor health to suit various religious and social contexts, and collecting material to be returned to in illness as a template for behaviour suited to their humoral and spiritual conditions.

I will examine predominantly manuscript texts, investigating the conventional frameworks governing various types of life-writing and asking, 'how well can those frameworks accommodate illness and how does illness test their limitations?'

¹⁰⁴ Andrew Cambers, *Godly Reading: Print Manuscript and Puritanism in England, 1580-1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁰⁵ Brian Vickers, *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp.76-77.

¹⁰⁶ Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England 1640-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p.25.

¹⁰⁷ Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, pp.58-60.

The first chapter will explore accounts of illness in seventeenth-century diaries. Here, I am interested in the applications of financial accounting techniques – which involve keeping accumulative records and transferring those records through several texts – to both religious and non-religious diaries. I examine the Puritan, spiritual diaries of Mary Rich, Oliver Heywood, Ralph Josselin and Margaret Hoby, uncovering evidence of illnesses and recoveries recorded in a search for signs of God's providence in the diarist's life. In methodology, if not exactly in content, these diaries have much in common with the “scientific” diary of Robert Hooke and the astrological diary of Samuel Jeake, each of which uses the text as a repository for large amounts of personal data relating to the author's health that is subsequently sifted and analysed.

In the second chapter, I turn to personal memoirs and other autobiographical texts, often written as part of similar processes of textual transmission to those which diaries figure in. I analyse the autobiographical writings of Alice Hayes, John Donne, Mary Rich, Anne Halkett, Alice Thornton, Richard Baxter and Roger North, again surveying religious and non-religious material for evidence of the relationship between illness and identity. Several – in particular those of Hayes and Donne – are forthright in their dismissal of what Hayes calls 'that Monster self' and there is some evidence of a tendency to revel in the process of divine correction that illness entails. But, in these cases too, I find much evidence of the relics of bookkeeping practices, episodes rewritten and edited from earlier (perhaps, diaristic) sources, and, in the case of North's non-religious text, a tendency still to preach stoicism in illness, replacing pious submission to God's will with a fortitude that is preferred to socially indecorous complaint.

In the third chapter, I turn to letters. Even in this type of writing that is generally not part of a chain of textual variations, I continue to find evidence of accounting practices in dealing with illness, a phenomenon of which the Twysden family papers provide an example. I also examine the letters of Robert Boyle, Anne Conway, and Donne's last letters, deploying several of the techniques for analysing early modern material letters as described by James Daybell and others.¹⁰⁸ Still, in these cases, I argue there is not substantial evidence of sustained self-reflection in illness, but rather a delicate balance of piety, confessional amicability, and self-conscious positioning by letter writers within their various epistolary communities. In the second part of the chapter, I turn to a different type of letter: that seeking diagnosis and medical advice. I examine letters by Benjamin Furly, Edward Lhwyd, and John Milton, examining the balance between the need to give a clear case history and the urge to analyse and rationalise illness.

Finally, I examine the poetry of illness. My fourth chapter explores poetry collecting and manuscript circulation as well as verse composition. I begin by examining poems about sickness as transcribed in commonplace books, reflecting on the commonplace circulation of poems by Henry Wotton and Edward Lapworth. Next, I consider personalised poetry written into books of meditations and autobiographical texts by Alatheia Bethell, Katherine Austen and Elizabeth Freke. After that, I move onto stand-alone poetry (by Nicholas Billingsley, An Collins and Hester Pulter) specifically composed in response to illness. I bring my arguments about collection and composition together in a discussion of the manuscript circulation of Donne's 'Hymne to God, my God in my Sicknes'.

¹⁰⁸ See especially, James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

The purpose of the evidence presented in these chapters is to give an account of illness viewed often through established textual and intellectual templates. In some cases, illness is taken for evidence of God's hand in the individual life of the author, and some employ a form of self-scrutiny that borders on fanaticism. Others appear to revel in the corrective experience of illness. I present examples of illnesses described both as self-obliterating and self-invigorating, but the moments of self-invigoration – I argue – are not evidence of a thoroughgoing early modern subjectivity. They are rather glimpses of a nascent, fragmentary and problematic sense of selfhood, often kept forcibly in check by strict observance of religious routines and adherence to restrictive textual conventions for recording life events.

*

Finally, a note on the materials: I divide my thesis into chapters headed, Diaries, Autobiography, Letters and Poetry but, in my usage, these terms are invoked loosely to try and distinguish certain methodologies of life-writing. In the case of diaries, I am interested in texts that give an aggregative account of the writer's life as it unfolds, consisting of regular entries covering short, chronological intervals. By the troublesome term autobiography, I mean after-the-fact life-writing that is not necessarily aggregative or chronological. Letters are easy to determine as texts written for the express attention of a named addressee to whom the paper was conveyed. In the case of poetry, I broaden my focus to examine not just the ways in which verse about sickness was composed but, additionally, the ways in which it was read and collected. These terms do not indicate discrete categories, and inevitably there is overlap between them.

I make much reference to texts compiled during the seventeenth century, some of which remain unpublished while others were not printed for years, decades or centuries afterwards. Where they are available and accessible, I have preferred to cite the manuscript versions of these texts rather than their subsequently revised and published editions. On some occasions, where a manuscript is not easily accessible but a reliable edition of a particular text has been printed, I have cited that: the diaries of Pepys, Josselin and Jeake are cases in point.¹⁰⁹ The majority of my citations, however, are from manuscripts, a matter that is of particular importance for those texts of which the edited versions deviate from their manuscript sources in ways that affect my arguments (for instance Alice Thornton's memoir and Oliver Heywood's papers).

This approach has inherent difficulties for two important texts. Hooke's early diary presents the problem that, while a scholarly edition is in preparation, no authoritative single text is yet available in print. Reference to the manuscript is also troublesome as the diary, which is in the London Metropolitan Archives, has not been marked with folio numbers and – more importantly, if citations are supposed to enable a reader to follow readily on the researcher's trail – is viewable only by supervised appointment. The diary was edited and published, with a number of omissions, by Henry Robinson and Walter Adams in 1935, and, in 2007, Felicity Henderson (who is preparing the edition of the diary that is in progress) published the material missing from the Robinson and Adams text.¹¹⁰ Therefore, while I will

¹⁰⁹ Pepys's diary, written in shorthand, is held in the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge, where access to it is granted only in exceptional circumstances. Josselin's diary is in private hands, although a microfilm of the text is available at the Essex Record Office (T/B 9/2). Jeake's diary, also containing shorthand passages, is held by the Clark Library at the University of California, Los Angeles, and no microfilm or digital facsimile is available.

¹¹⁰ Felicity Henderson, 'Unpublished Material from the Memorandum Book of Robert Hooke, Guildhall Library MS 1758', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, 61 (2007), 129-175.

offer a description of the manuscript and occasional comments on its text, my citations of the early diary will be pegged to page numbers in Robinson and Adams's edition in conjunction with Henderson's supplement. References to the later diary, held in the British Library as MS. Sloane 4024, will be to that manuscript.

Richard Baxter's memoir *Reliquiae Baxterianæ*, is similarly troublesome. The edition of the text edited by Matthew Sylvester and printed in 1696 is, as I will discuss, notoriously flawed. A new scholarly edition is in preparation, but, in the meantime, reference to the work's manuscript sources is problematic in that, not only have Baxter's papers on which the text was based been separated (they are now spread between the Dr Williams Library and the British Library) but, also, substantial parts of the manuscript are missing altogether. Rather than make reference to the two separate manuscripts and to Sylvester at places for which there is no manuscript, I have resolved to use Sylvester as my principal source, giving additional references to the manuscripts where it is necessary to correct or contextualise Sylvester's version.

1.

DIARIES

This chapter will examine a set of diaries that – although they appear to be the products of authors with widely various backgrounds and intentions – have a surprising degree of structure and methodology in common. Adam Smyth has challenged casual assumptions of the seventeenth-century diary as a spontaneous, unmediated expression of a diarist's selfhood, showing that much of the autobiographical writing preserved in the manuscript archives (contrary to the appearance of the minority of texts that have been edited and printed) has roots in apparently prescriptive forms of record keeping, including account books, annotations in astrological almanacs, commonplace books and even parish registers.¹

Smyth's case develops from the observation that scholarship of early modern life-writing has vastly overstated the role of subjectivity in autobiographical texts, arguing that, in a number of cases, early modern autobiographical writing was designed not to assert individual selfhood in response to events, but to assess the writer's material wealth (hence the importance of financial accounting to diary writing), or, perhaps, to register his or her social or religious standing.² Often, such texts were cast as part of a long tradition of genealogical accounting, keeping track of a household's place in the historic lineage of the family to which it belonged. Thus, the textual origins of much diary-keeping are far more prescriptive than its popular reputation (especially that of

¹ Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*.

² Margareta de Grazia, in particular, has argued for the close connection between material possessions and personal identity in the early modern period. De Grazia, 'The Ideology of Superfluous Things', 18-42.

Pepys)³ might allow. Many diaries, Smyth demonstrates, were simply components of an overall system of household book-keeping, members of textual networks produced both by individuals and groups.

The example of Oliver Freeman's diary and account book, preserved at the University of Texas at Austin,⁴ demonstrates the interconnections of diary-keeping and financial book-keeping. The text comprises twenty four unbound leaves, cut from what, presumably, was once a notebook binding. Covering the period between 1654 and 1666, many of the volume's pages list Freeman's income and outgoings in columns of pounds, shillings and pence. Typical information includes:

September ye 14. 1662			
Hs fr 2 nights wharf	£	s	d
at ye Inn & on ye axse of	0	2	0
City at London			
March ye 26.	£	s	d
H two Hoggs ye Generall	2	0	0
Boards October 2. 1662.			
For Mr Michael Taylor for 44 foot	£	s	d
of boardes three halfe penny foot	0	05	06
If ye 11th of October sent to Roberts			
All good til ye 11 of Novemb	02	00	00 ⁵

But amid the numerical records of Freeman's business dealings and personal expenses, the book also contains a register of births, baptisms and deaths, both in the Freeman family and in English public life, as well as lists of the sermons he heard with their texts, and snatches of commentary on his life experiences. Freeman marked his wife's death, in 1658, by noting the date and time of her death, the date and place of her burial, the bare details of her life – 'aged seventy years & halfe / marryed about forty six yeares & a halfe / Dyed at Windsor manner park house' – and a table of 'charges for her

³ For a reassessment of the textual origins of Pepys's diary, see Dawson 'Histories and Texts'.

⁴ University of Texas at Austen, Harry Ransom Centre, HRC 119. A digital facsimile of the text can be viewed at http://norman.hrc.utexas.edu/mnemGal/119/HRC_119.pdf.

⁵ Ibid, f.5r.

funerall'.⁶ Of Cromwell's death, two years later, he gave fewer details, though he offered a snippet of contextual information, recording, 'Oliv Cromwel L protector Dyed in White hall Septemb. 3. 1658 about 3 of y^e clocke being of a fryday. after the great wind in y^e afternoone as I did swere it'.⁷ A strain of non-conformist zeal – hinted at by the appearance of the name [Edmund] Calamy, among others, on his sermon list⁸ – is given fuller expression in his analysis of the 1666 London fire: 'lost buried fired & burnt the loss is supposed to be eight thousand pounds god is still in way of his judgments & desultations and yet wee repent not of our Cruelty opressions and prisoning gods servants until god delivered by an high hand as he did straek out of Egipt'.⁹ Even here, Freeman held to the book-keeping form, recording the estimated value of the fire's damage, but he exceeded its limits, straying into a type of providential analysis familiar in Protestant spiritual autobiography: he examines the effect (destruction by fire) and, from that, reasons the cause (persecution of non-conformists). As this method of recording is applied to public events, so it is turned to Freeman's illnesses. Another entry has:

March ye 5 1658

The Lord has pleased in his mercy towards me to lay his hand upon me the 5th of March wh extreame payne in my shouder as I was rising out of my bed and I trust in a time he will remove it the lord in mercy prepare me for my futur end blessed be my heavenly farther in Christ Jesus amen.¹⁰

The pages that survive of Freeman's diary are few, but enough have been preserved to convey the notebook's purpose. It clearly held rough memoranda taken down to keep track of Freeman's personal finances and spiritual development. Noting the date of his shoulder pain's onset would enable Freeman, returning to his notes, to gauge its duration

⁶ Ibid, f.9v.

⁷ Ibid, f.9r

⁸ Ibid, f.22r.

⁹ Ibid, f.24v.

¹⁰ Ibid, f.8r.

and development. Even jotting a short prayer that he should be prepared for his 'futur end' and a formal expression of devotion – 'blessed be my heavenly farther in Christ Jesus armen' – registered his immediate recognition of the pain's providential origin, the records noting both its timeframe and Freeman's penitent reaction to God's dealings with him.

Many Protestant life-writers used similar book-keeping methodology to account for their spiritual conditions, and models were developed setting out the limits of the practice. The Puritan clergyman John Beadle gave most explicit expression to the similarities of financial accounting and Protestant self-scrutiny. Christian life, he argued, should entail a literal tallying of divine providence against punishment. In a description resounding with implications of New World colonialism, Beadle's *Journall or Diary of a Thankfull Christian* (1656) explained, 'Every true believer is a Merchant adventurer, whose returns must be greater then his ventures, or he cannot live'.¹¹ Such scrutiny was not intended to focus solely on the individual life; Beadle also believed that lessons should be taken from the experiences of others and, of course, the example of the Bible. He reminded his readers, 'There is a book of three leaves thou shouldest read dayly to make up this Diary; the black leaf of thy own and others sins with shame and sorrow, the white leaf of Gods goodnesse, mercies with joy and thankfulness; the red leaf of God's judgements felt, feared, threatened, with fear and trembling'.¹² The account-keeping method was also recommended by the Lancashire minister Isaac Ambrose, who spoke of 'Ancients that were accustomed to keep Diaries or Day-books of their actions, and out of them to take an account of their lives'. The result, Ambrose recommended, would be that 'Hereby he observes something of God to his soul, and of

¹¹ John Beadle, *The Journal or Diary of a Thankful Christian* (London: Parkhurst, 1656), sig.A6v.

¹² Ibid, p.16.

his soul to God'.¹³ Ambrose includes his advice on diary-writing under the heading *Self-tryal*, recommending an alternative method of personal-scrutiny: 'After supper, when you lie down, and are ready to sleep, and have great quietnesse and silence, without presence or disturbance of any, then erect a Tribunal for your own Consciences'.¹⁴ That curious phrase articulates the ambiguity of the self-scrutiny that early modern Protestants sought to practise. Inward-looking and self-focused, it was not, however, spontaneous, entailing the enactment of a formal 'Tribunal' procedure with its own protocols and boundaries.

Smyth and Dawson agree that Pepys's diary is more deeply rooted in book-keeping than is commonly acknowledged: their case is convincing but, even though the diary may have had a reasonably conventional textual history, it does not employ the Puritan methods of self-examination described by Ambrose. Pepys, though not averse to assessing his standing in various realms,¹⁵ is far less concerned with testing his findings against a moral standard in the way Ambrose suggests. While his diary contains evidence of much religious practice, he does not appear to conceive of diary-writing as itself a religious act. This puts his journal into contrast with the types of diaries described by Beadle and Ambrose, scrutinising the details of their authors' lives for evidence of God's providence. At their most concertedly pious, such diaries embody a fundamental paradox: an insistence on God's providence brings as a corollary a natural disdain for selfhood and individual agency but, in many cases, the search for providence in the minutest details of bodily and family life sometimes leads the diarist into a self-obsession that borders on outright solipsism.¹⁶

¹³ Isaac Ambrose, *Prima, the First Things, In Reference to the Middle & Last Things* (London: Reynolds, 1674), p.118.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.117.

¹⁵ See Dawson, 'Histories and Texts', pp.425-7.

¹⁶ For a discussion of Protestant self-absorption, see Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.39-48.

These are the terms on which I will approach diaries in this chapter: not as blank canvasses onto which emotional responses to illness are painted, but as textual forms, often derived from traditions of household accounting and prescribed by the physical limitations of the manuscripts onto which they are written. The question I wish to ask is: how does illness test the framework of these forms?

I will begin with an example from Pepys. The work of Smyth and Dawson demands that assumptions of Pepys's diary as spontaneous, unmediated and confessional be revised. It is precisely because Pepys appears, from certain aspects, to make a consistent expression of the diarist's subjective self that I wish to use his text to set the tone for this discussion, showing the ways in which his diary bears comparison to – as well as the ways in which it deviates from – the practice of spiritual diary-keeping by seventeenth-century Protestants. Example of that will follow. I will examine first the diaries of Mary Rich, the Countess of Warwick and elder sister of Robert Boyle, and, afterwards, those of the Lancashire minister Oliver Heywood. Both kept diaries as only one part of a complex of texts into which their life experiences were written. Next, I will turn to the minutely detailed journal of Ralph Josselin and its fanatical search for evidence of God's providence in Josselin's life, as well as the devotional text of Margaret Hoby.

The principles of accounting, however, do not only apply to religious life-writing, as I will show, turning my discussion to the diaries of Robert Hooke, which began life as a series of tables for recording meteorological data, developing into detailed records of, among other things, Hooke's health complaints and medicine taking. Finally, I will look at the astrological diary of Samuel Jeake, the Sussex merchant, who took a similar approach to accruing data, both concerning his illnesses and the positions

of the stars and planets, though with the more Josselin-like intention of uncovering evidence of heavenly providence through that process.

PEPYS AND THE END OF HIS DIARY

When Pepys's failing sight led him to give up his diary, he took his leave in an intriguing entry:

And so I betake myself to that course which [is] almost as much as to see myself go into my grave – for which, and all the discomforts that will accompany my being blind, the good God prepare me.¹⁷

The equivalence Pepys saw between discontinuing his diary and seeing 'myself go into my grave' suggests that the diary – in spite of its conventional origins in prescriptive textual forms – had developed into an act of self-creation with such significance that for Pepys to stop making regular entries was tantamount to self-obliteration. Dawson and Smyth have argued that Pepys's diary is a far less spontaneously self-expressive text than many readings have assumed. The diary is an intriguing bibliographical prospect: a fair-copy manuscript written in cipher, contained in six calf-bound volumes that Pepys saw fit to have posthumously stamped with his crest and motto.¹⁸ Dawson has shown that it was a part of a network of texts in which Pepys transcribed the experiences of his life, pointing out, 'the diary cross-references other more specific records of sermons, personal transactions and official dealings, letters, table talk, and household expenditure which were also maintained by Pepys'. 'The diary was important', Dawson acknowledges, 'yet we would do well to bear in mind that it was first among equals'.¹⁹ Smyth, meanwhile, holds that 'Pepys's famously impulsive prose was not immediate,

¹⁷ Pepys, IX, p.565.

¹⁸ A codicil to his will of 13 May 1703 left these instructions, which applied to all the books in Pepys library, and were to be carried out by his nephew John Jackson. See 'Pepys's Will' in *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: vol X, Pepysiana*, ed. Henry B. Wheatley (London: Bell, 1899), 250-270, p.266.

¹⁹ Dawson 'Histories and Texts', p.415.

'unconscious', or unreserved, but was in fact the product of numerous distinct and careful stages of revision. 'Pepys's diary represents not spontaneity, but the artful construction of spontaneity'.²⁰ These are important contexts for approaching Pepys and ought fundamentally to destabilise many casual assumptions about his text, but they also raise a further difficulty: that, as in the entry in which the diarist imagines watching his own burial, the diary still enabled Pepys, at times, to stand removed from and observe the self it sought to record.

Walter Ong has argued that such a separation is a peculiar characteristic of modern diary-writing. 'We do not normally talk to ourselves', he points out, 'certainly not in long involved sentences and paragraphs'. What is more, 'the diarist, pretending to be talking to himself has also, since he is writing, to pretend he is somehow not there'.²¹ The principle could not be comfortably applied to many seventeenth-century diaries and, as Dawson and Smyth demonstrate, it does not hold good, even as a general overview of Pepys's diary-keeping. However, at this point, Pepys's paradoxical analogy for the loss of his diary writing – imagining spectating at his own funeral – seems to describe exactly the condition of the diarist described by Ong, presenting himself as literally an onlooker: he watches as his eyesight fades, seeing himself go into the grave. Self-reflexive as this entry is, it also demonstrates a sense in which Pepys's diary was prescribed by his physical body as well as his observing self. His ability to record his life was dependent on his being able to see. Late experiments with having the diary 'kept by my people',²² did not approach the methodological consistency of Pepys's journals between 1660 and 1669.

The coincidence between this instance of Pepys's seventeenth-century diary-

²⁰ Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, p.55.

²¹ Walter Ong, 'A Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction', *PMLA*, 90 (1975) 9-21, p.20.

²² Pepys, IX, p.564. For a description of Pepys's later attempts at diary-keeping, see *ibid*, p.565n.

keeping and Ong's twentieth-century account of the practice was fleeting, and does not indicate that Pepys was radically modern in his outlook. Pepys's readers, seeing this entry, need not automatically take the diary for an inherently confessional, internal and subjective text. On the contrary, Pepys's association of self and diary might plausibly indicate that the habits of diary-writing, data accumulation and repackaging had become so ingrained that they had developed into a way of living. That Pepys regarded his selfhood as, at least in part, constituted by material concerns is suggested by the equivalence he appears to give to financial and personal matters. On 30 May 1662, he recorded, 'This morning I made up my accounts and find myself *de Claro* worth about 530*l.* and no more, so little have I encreased it since my last reckoning'.²³ The following year, he wrote, 'So home to supper and to bed – being troubled to find myself so bound as I am, notwithstanding all the physic that I take'.²⁴ And, after his appointment to the Tangier committee in 1662, he noted, 'on all hands, by God's blessing, I find myself a very rising man'.²⁵ Equally of significance is that Pepys expressly acknowledges the diary not as an exercise in self-assertion, but one in evidence-sifting and analysis: matters of wealth, health and status are all accounted for as acts of "finding himself" among the data he had assembled to measure each variable.

MARY RICH

Those habits of long-term data accrual are plain to see in other diaries of the age. Mary Rich – countess of Warwick and elder sister of Robert Boyle – practised the accretion of spiritual data in an especially concerted manner. Rich kept her diaries, which run to

²³ Pepys, III, p.95. The diary contains many more such instances of personal auditing on these terms.

²⁴ Pepys, IV, p.397. See also, 28 February 1663: 'Waked with great pain in my right eare (which I find myself much subject to), having taken cold'. Ibid, p.61.

²⁵ Pepys, III, p.172. See also, 13 November 1667: 'I do find myself mightily wronged in my reputation, and indeed in my purse and business'. Ibid, VIII, p.527.

some 3,000 manuscript pages, covering the period from August 1666 until November 1677, in a series of quarto-sized notebooks, now preserved as five leather-bound volumes in the British Library.²⁶ The regularity of the sheets over the decade covered by the journals enabled a rigorously systematic approach to accumulating personal data.²⁷ Rich kept her life records according to a fairly restrictive methodology. Her general formula for each entry was to begin with a note about her morning prayers, which she went to 'as sone as drest',²⁸ 'as sone as up',²⁹ or 'as sone as awaked'.³⁰ In the evening, she usually closed by recording that 'aftur supar I committed my Soule to God'.³¹ By the end of the diary, these phrases had become so well used that Rich was able to compress them into a trusty shorthand: 'In the m/ as sone as I w. I b G'.³² Rich's mornings usually began with blessing God (which is what her initials 'b G' indicate), prayer, meditation, or some combination of all three. She also records the locations of these activities, which, normally, were performed in her 'Closet'³³ (also her preferred venue for private reading), after she had gone 'into the garden',³⁴ or, sometimes, after a retreat 'into the wilderness'³⁵ (probably a garden close to Rich's Chelsea home). Variations on these

²⁶ British Library, Add. MSS. 27351-27355.

²⁷ Rich's manuscripts all measure 15cm by 20cm. Even the volumes of Pepys's diaries vary slightly in size and shape.

²⁸ BL, MS. Add. 27351, f.41v.

²⁹ Ibid, f.57r.

³⁰ Ibid, f.33r.

³¹ BL, MS. Add. 27352, f.36r.

³² BL, MS. Add. 27355, f.130r. The significance of repetition and abbreviation in early modern Protestant culture has received some scholarly attention. Building on the argument of Joseph Koerner that, 'In Protestant culture, words acquired the status of things by their aggressive material inscription' (Joseph Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), p.283), Iain McGilchrist observes, 'It is fascinating that the way to get meaning across is apparently to repeat the words endlessly, drumming it further and further into the realm of the over-familiar, the domain of the left-hemisphere'. He notes that 'The letters VDMIE [short for *verbum Domini manet in aeternum*] were embroidered and reproduced endlessly, ultimately becoming, despite the Reformers, a totemic, apotropaic device a talisman with the status of an idol, as the reified words in their abbreviated form become the only available 'thing' for the sacred to attach to'. Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Modern World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p.318.

³³ BL, MS. Add. 27351, f.33r.

³⁴ Ibid, f.57r.

³⁵ Ibid, f.19v.

routines were usually enforced by changes in Rich's health or, more commonly, that of her husband, with whose condition the diary was much concerned until his death in 1673. The main purpose of entering details of her own ailments appears to have been to register deviations from her established devotional routine. On two consecutive days in March 1667, she recorded:

20) in the morneing as sone as upe toke physicke, onely pray to God in short for a blesing for that day

21) in the morneing as sone as dreste reatired and red and meditated, but being very much indisposed and ill after my physick I was in all I did that morneing but dull, in the euening reatired to meditate, but my body being much indisposed I contined all that day dull, yet did what I could to awaken my heart³⁶

Clearly, the purpose of these entries is not to give a narrative of Rich's developing illness, the only mention of it on the first day being an indirect reference to her having 'toke physicke'. The second day's entry gives no further clues about the condition's origin or nature, enlarging only to the extent that she is now 'much indisposed and ill after my physick'. This record, however, demonstrates Rich's concern with quality as well as quantity: having skimped on her religious offices the previous day, she is back on track, recording that she 'reatired and red and meditated'. But her system of accounting for her spiritual condition – her observing, in Isaac Ambrose's phrase, 'something of God to [her] soul, and of [her] soul to God' – keeps a register not only of duties done, but of the vigour with which they are done. Her physic left her 'in all I did that morneing but dull' and, in the evening, she was 'indisposed' and 'contined all that day dull'. Such dullness in devotion, sometimes caused by ill-health, sometimes not, is a common occurrence in Rich's diary. Seven years after this entry, she was still recording 'In the mo. I red meditated and prayed, but In all my spirituall performanses I was still

³⁶ Ibid, f.71r.

dull and dispirited being still much indisposed In my health'.³⁷

This is Rich's method of compiling data, which she does on a large scale. But her diary demands to be read not only as one of a network of texts (Rich's papers also include books of 'Occasional Meditations' and 'Specialities' describing passages in her life) but also as part of a network of devotional behaviour. Rich's diary-keeping appears to constitute one element of her religious routine, others of which were praying, meditating, reading (both the Bible and works of theology) and, sometimes, religious conversation.³⁸ On 2 September 1670, Rich spent the latter part of the day 'alone in reading in my diarys, and in exsamining my own heart tell evening'.³⁹ Having done that, she found that 'God did againe inable me to morne and weepe much before him for my sinnes extreemely did I doe so for the nationes sinnes which I was large in the confession of and did confess God was just in the miserys he had brought upon us, and in particular in the destrouction of London by fire'.⁴⁰ Two important inferences about Rich's diary can be drawn from this entry. First, (in her case and that of Freeman) the distinction between her particular self and the national identity was not so sharp as might casually be assumed, the nation's sins were her sins. Second, once made, her diary entries continued to influence her devotional behaviour years after the event: rereading her reports of the 1666 fire in 1670, Rich was moved again to mourn and weep for her own sins and the nation's.

So, Rich's self-scrutiny in the diary is not always an investigation of her individual subjectivity, though her worries about being spiritually 'dull' perhaps imply anxieties about her internal, mental life. Rather, the diary keeps an aggregative record of

³⁷ BL, MS. Add. 27354, f.163v.

³⁸ Conversations of particular use or moment were note in her diary. For example, on 30 April 1675, Rich recorded, 'I went with my La Mary to visett Mr Baxter had from him much good edifying warmeing discourse'. BL, MS. Add. 27354, f.14r.

³⁹ BL, MS. Add. 27352, f.82v.

⁴⁰ Ibid, ff.82v-83r.

her pious behaviour and, at times, her contribution to national as well as individual salvation. Thus, in 1671, on her forty-sixth birthday, she wrote:

in the morneing as sone as up I reatired into the wilderness to meditate and it being my Birthday it pleased God to make me call to my remembrance any of the spesall mersyes with which my life was fill'd and whilst I was doing so the consideration that God had for fourty six yeares so mersyfully provided for me that I had not ever <out of neaseasety> wanted a meals meate, or ever brok a bone, nor ever in more then twenty yeares been necessitated to keape my bed one day by reason of sicknes, did exsidingly draw out my heart to loue God, and I did too <find> that <the> Consideration that I had experimentally fond that God had by all the most afflicting providences done me good, <my heart was> much ingaged to God, and made me resolute to indeauer the serueing him better,⁴¹

This is more than a record of thanks to God for good health. Rich is engaged in a systematic process of assessing her spiritual condition through the body. The review was a prescribed, regular event, performed as a part of the devotional routine of her birthday. Rich was not, as many Puritan diarists did, reliving near misses and dangerous accidents, she was reviewing her stable health over forty six years. Equally, the process implies that Rich saw health and wealth as analogous: her review brought her to the conclusions that she had 'never broke a bone, nor ever in more then twenty yeares been necessitated to keape my bed one day by reason of sicknes', and that she had never, in that time, 'wanted a meals meate' (which was at least partly thanks to her family's financial security). The result of the process, too, is interesting. Reviewing her body, Rich says, 'did exsidingly draw out my heart to loue God'. Her realisation that God had by 'all the most afflicting providences done me good' left her heart 'much ingaged to' him. Illness and adversity, when they came, were both mild and useful, but what is significant here is that Rich aspires to occupy a mental world in which she has very little subjective agency, being instead 'ingaged to God'.

The diary entry finds her at a moment of ideal devotion when her providential

⁴¹ Ibid, f.246r. Phrases in angle brackets have been written in by Rich as superscript insertions.

treatment draws out her heart to love God. Puritans observed a strong opposition between the heart (which absorbs spiritual truth) and the head (which is confined to superficial habits of thought and reason) – expressed by Bunyan in his criticism of a sinner: 'your head is full of the knowledge of the Scriptures, though thine heart be empty of sanctifying grace'.⁴² It is Rich's heart that controls her 'resolue to indeauer the serueing him better', without her brain having to intervene by making a conscious decision in the matter. Most significantly, this ideal attachment to God was achieved by a systematic process of review, retreat and meditation: the diary's role in that process, then, appears to have been to record her devotional behaviour and its outcomes for Rich to read back and relive in coming years.

But what happened when the process did not run so smoothly? As we have seen, in cases of mild or short illness, Rich was able to endure a certain amount of disruption to her devotional routine and – though she fretted about the consequences of neglecting to perform her religious offices – she was usually able to maintain order of a kind. In 1668, she suffered a sharp spell of cold and headache:

in the morneing when I waked was very ill with my colde and fumes to my head, which caused a violent beating in my heade, and made me unfitt for any thinge, yet in prayer my heart did breath after God, I had frequent reaturnes to God by short ejaculations, God was pleased to put this into my minde which much affected me, that if a cold and fumes in my head could so much dose and indispose me that I was unfitt for any seruice of God, how ill could I performe any thinge to him If I ware unfitted with a feauer or any acute disease (Lord I beseech thee sanctify this consideration to me, that I may not haue any thinge to doe when I am sicke but may now make my peace with thee in my health seeing how exsidingly indisposed I am when Ill

⁴² John Bunyan, *Some Gospel-truths Opened According to the Scriptures* (London: Wright, 1656), p.17. Similarly, in 1597, Richard Greenham distinguished between 'reading hearing, and conferring', which, 'do most strengthen judgment, and in part whet on affection' and 'praying, singing, and meditation', which 'do most chiefly whet up affection, but in part strengthen judgment and vnderstanding'. Richard Greenham, *Propositions Containing Answers to Certaine Demaunds in Divers Spirituall Matters* (Edinburgh: Waldegrave, 1597), sig.A5r. For a discussion of early modern "heart religion", see Ted Campbell, *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991). See also Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, pp.265-267.

to serue thee my God⁴³

In spite of a sickness described in more lurid terms than Rich was accustomed to using, her devout instincts endured ('yet in prayer my heart did breath after God'). She fell back on an implicit devotional instinct that seems to have been physiological. Without the stamina to compose orthodox, verbal prayer, Rich's recourse was to a form of prayer that asserted the primacy of her heart, leaving it to its in-built instinct to breath after God. But her vulnerability to distraction still troubled her, as illness interrupted her religious routine. In spite of her practical solution of 'short ejaculations' to God (which detail, being recorded, might jog her memory should she read back experiencing similar problems), she remained 'affected'. The 'cold and fumes in my head' indisposed her natural devotional state, rendering her 'unfitt for any seruice of God'. Here, the head begins to dominate the heart. Rich fantasises about what would have been the outcome if her condition were worse: 'how ill could I performe any thinge to him If I ware unfitted with a feauer or any acute disease'. Her instinctive response was to fall back on her routine of prayer, referring the problem to God with a plea to simplify her condition, asking 'that I may not haue any thinge to doe when I am sicke'.

Some episodes of illness were so severe that the whole system was thrown into chaos. When her husband died in 1673, Rich broke with convention:

I spent this whole day in a very stoned and astonished Condition, not being anufe reacolected to doe any spirituall duty as I ought to doe, or as formerly I use to doe, I had many good and christian friendes that came to visitt me and did indeauor by good Counsell to comfort me, and some of the minesturs prayd with me⁴⁴

Remembering the continuity Rich appeared to see between her identity as an individual and as a member of society, the ministrations of her friends may have seemed to her a

⁴³ BL, MS. Add. 27351, f.153r.

⁴⁴ BL, MS. Add. 27353, f.215v.

more substantial replacement for her personal religious duties than might initially be supposed. Certainly she thought them worth entering in her diary. Still, illness quickly followed and, the next day,

I fond my selfe much bodily discomposd, haueing neauer bene able to take any rest or to eate, my stomach being with my exstrordinary grieffe quite gone, and I finding such terrible tremblings of heart that I was much discomposd, but did still striue to beare with Christian patience what God had layd upon me, I confind all this day in my bed much, discomposd, and stoned, but got mr warren to pray with me, the deasires of my heart went out to God in that prayer, and after supper I committed my Soule to God⁴⁵

Even in this desperate case, a semblance of devotional practice is beginning to return. Rich's body – wracked with sleep loss, undernourished, and suffering 'terrible tremblings of heart' – presents a stern challenge to her usual piety, preventing her heart from breathing 'after God' as it had before. For the first time, she takes to her bed, but, even so, she depicts this episode as a struggle to maintain 'Christian patience' in the face of strenuous physical trials, rather than dwelling on the grief that occasioned her illness. After missing only one day's pieties since her husband's death, by the end of the entry, she was again committing her 'Soule to God'.

In fact, both her grief and the illness persisted. A week later Rich recorded, 'I was this day in order to my health lett blood, but still much to my troble fond my head so weake and ill that I could not long fix my thoughtes'.⁴⁶ The next day, attempting to meditate, she was 'still so sadly cast doune with malencolly that I was not able to fixe my thoughtes, being much trobled with roueing thoughtes'.⁴⁷ Still, her head disrupted the sovereignty of Rich's heart: her roving thoughts were brought on by a humoral disorder that made falling back on her heart's innate religious instincts risky. Throughout these trials, Rich's diary-keeping was steadfastly maintained. The diary

⁴⁵ Ibid, f.216r.

⁴⁶ Ibid, f.220r.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

kept, as it were, a running total of her changing condition, its methodology constraining her 'roueing thoughtes', with her physical and spiritual states its two principle sources of aggregated information.

OLIVER HEYWOOD

Like Rich, the Puritan minister Oliver Heywood made a daily accretion of data over a long term. Heywood began his ministerial career in 1650 at Coley in West Yorkshire, but was ejected from his position in 1662 after a dispute arising from his refusal to follow the Book of Common Prayer. A declaration of indulgence in 1687 enabled him to take up a formal position at another Yorkshire parish, Northowram, which he occupied until his death in 1702.

Rich's diaries were, as I have said, one part of a network of her texts that also included a book of meditations and a memoir of 'specialities' (notable events) in her life. These she appeared to regard as distinct texts, writing them in separate notebooks, and I will, therefore, discuss them and their relation to her diary in Chapter 2. Oliver Heywood's notebooks, on the other hand, present a more complex set of textual relationships, making fewer distinctions between aggregative (diaristic) and retrospective (memoir) writing. Heywood's papers are mostly held in a series of variously sized octavo notebooks at the British Library,⁴⁸ with a further five notebooks at Halifax Central Library.⁴⁹ The bulk of these materials was edited and published in four volumes by J. H. Turner between 1881 and 1885, the result being a textually accurate edition which does not, however, do full justice to Heywood's methodology for recording his life.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Heywood Papers. BL, MS. Add. 45963-45978.

⁴⁹ Halifax Central Library, MISC. 509/4-8 and SP. 73.

⁵⁰ J. H. Turner, ed., *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., 1630-1702: His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, 4 vols. (Brighouse and Bingley: Bayes and Harrison, 1882-5).

The problem is one of categorisation: for convenience in reading, Turner's edition divides Heywood's writings into generic headings, some corresponding to titles given by Heywood, others the product of Turner's editorial interpretation. More importantly, in treating the different types of Heywood's writing as discrete works, and printing them under different headings, Turner's edition does not adequately convey the fact that Heywood's notebooks contain a variety of different types of life-writing, many of which appear to be compiled simultaneously rather than sequentially.

To clarify Heywood's methodology for inscribing autobiographical details, it will be helpful to compare an example of Turner's material with the notebooks from which he takes it. The first two volumes of the British Library's notebooks begin with biographical accounts of members of Heywood's family⁵¹ and a 'Relation of the most considerable passages of my life from my infancy hitherto',⁵² which Turner styled as 'Rev. O. Heywood's Autobiography'.⁵³ It is a reasonable designation, though it implies that Heywood regarded the text as a complete, discrete work, whereas the same notebook also contains reflections on Heywood's spiritual condition and his son's escape from a dangerous illness, further 'Observations Experimental as to Others', an anagram on the name Oliver Heywood, a fragment of verse, and two sets of spiritual commonplaces. Further, the notebook – a leather-bound volume with metal clasps – is of a consistent size and type with at least six other items in the Heywood collection, with others varying only slightly in size and binding. The similarity of these volumes conveys the impression not of distinct texts, but of a set of receptacles into which Heywood entered life-writings in various modes, including accounting, autobiography, diary, spiritual meditation, commonplace note-taking,⁵⁴ booklists and verse.

⁵¹ BL, MS. Add. 45963.

⁵² BL, MS. Add. 45964, f.19r.

⁵³ Turner, I, pp.133-202.

⁵⁴ For commonplace note-taking as a form of life-writing, see Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern*

Andrew Cambers has rightly called for scholarship to take 'a backward step in order to analyze how diaries were read by their writers and by others, how they were preserved for posterity, and how they were used as part of godly belief'.⁵⁵ In Heywood's case, such a perspective seems especially necessary to understand the full variety of his life-writing. His methodology is complex, but it is made clear in one of his notes that he saw a connection between religious devotion and the act of writing:

I am much pressed in spirit to renew my covenant in writing with god that would tel me to be plain-dealing in this case, that I may neither deal falsely in making nor keeping covenant with my god, so far as I know any thing of this treacherous heart I desire to be upright and doun-right in this busines: for none is privy to these things but god and mine own conscience, and the rather I doe this because I haue fond my heart slippery and inconstant, that I may tye my self under mine oun hand-writing, taking my warrant from Isai 44 5:⁵⁶

Heywood sees the handwritten word as authoritative and authentic. Inscribing his 'covenants' in his notebooks prevented him from 'dealing falsely', forcing him to confront the plain record of his promises to God, while tying himself 'under mine oun hand-writing' gave the covenant the authority of a binding contract. Unlike Rich, whose heart was the dependable organ of devotion, opposed to the irreverent head, Heywood's heart is deceitful and dangerous. His handwritten covenants with God helped reinforce his defence against the wanderings of his 'treacherous', 'slippery and inconstant' heart. Like Rich, seeking to quell her 'roueing thoughts', Heywood designed his life records to have practical effects on his otherwise-unruly nature. The reference to Isaiah 44:5 – One shall say, I am the Lords: and another shall call himselfe by the name of Iacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himselfe by the name of Israel – emphasises the equivalence Heywood saw between autobiographical writing and signing himself over to God's ownership (a claim that raises questions of any

England, pp.123-58.

⁵⁵ Andrew Cambers, 'Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England, circa 1580–1720', *Journal of British Studies*, 46:4 (2007), 796-825, p.798.

⁵⁶ BL, MS. Add. 45965, f.105v.

attempt to read emergent subjectivity into Heywood's papers).

A thread of commercial speak is apparent in the entry: Heywood wished 'to be upright and doun-right in this busines', he signed a 'warrant', and implicitly turned himself into property. Such self-accounting recurs throughout his life records. The text Turner reprints as the 'Diary'⁵⁷ is transcribed from a notebook that begins with a set of financial data jotted on the verso side of its first page.⁵⁸ Diaristic notes follow, breaking off after five pages for a set of notes on Heywood's reading (mostly on historical subjects), and resuming thirteen pages later. When his diary-keeping gets more concerted under way, Heywood's journal bears some similarities to that of Rich: he is more likely to record the illnesses of his family and immediate circle than to take note of his own symptoms and, when he does succumb to personal illness, it is cast in terms of the interference it caused to Heywood's ministerial and devotional routine:

On thursday I came homeward as farre as James Hardmans of Broadfield near to Heywood, there I preacht upon the wednesday, but what with a cold I had got and my excessiue paines for 5 houres that day my body was much disordered, and with some difficulty we got home upon thursday April 30 68: the morning after being may-day I took too pills which wrought strangely and haue purgd me effectually, blessed be god, that day my Neighbour had a private day, I was with them as much as I could, and it was a good day my heart was sweetly enlarged in joyning, tho I was not exercised: god will hear and answer
on lords day I had an aguish fit of cold in the forenoone and heat in the afternoon, yet because company was come, I preached twice tho I was little fit, but god graciously helped, and hearts were much enlarged by the advantage of my distemper, but it increased tormenting pain in my head, on munday I was blooded,⁵⁹

At this time, Heywood was banned from preaching,⁶⁰ but his reputation was such that he received invitations from congregations in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and sustained himself as an itinerant minister. On this occasion, he had been in Manchester,

⁵⁷ Turner, I, pp.223-304.

⁵⁸ BL. MS. Add. 45965, f.1v.

⁵⁹ Ibid, f.44v.

⁶⁰ See Edmund Calamy, *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, 2 vols. (London: Harris, 1775), II, pp.560-562.

performing a baptism and had organised his schedule such that the sermon at Broadfield would coincide with the homeward journey to Coley. In this entry, Heywood keeps a register of his bodily, ministerial and devotional conditions: his day at Broadfield was dominated by 'cold' and 'excessiue paines' that lasted five hours and made his journey problematic, but did not put him off fulfilling his preaching engagement. The following day, Heywood's participation in his neighbours' day of private prayer was impeded by the physic he had taken, but his diminished role in the ceremony ('as much as I could') is recorded, as are the benefits it yielded ('my heart was sweetly enlarged'). The next day, assisted by God's grace, Heywood fulfilled a ministerial obligation in spite of being impaired by his 'aguish fit of cold' and his pain increasing. His bodily condition and devotional practice appear to be linked: his heart, sometimes 'treacherous', 'slippery and inconstant', responds to prayer (and perhaps to the pills he took that morning) by becoming 'enlarged'. Felt experience is the marker of devotional success and, as Heywood measures his prayer's effectiveness by the enlargements of his heart, so he measures the impact of his preaching by 'hearts' in his congregation being 'much enlarged', an effect assisted 'by the advantage of my distemper'.⁶¹

Heywood reports his submitting to bloodletting on the Monday without elaboration or analysis; it is the only fact he noted that day. This detail exemplifies Heywood's habit of keeping records of his life events rather than interrogating them. His notes (written at a time when their author was ejected from the church and perpetually threatened with dispossession or imprisonment) make a similar record of Heywood's social standing to that which Dawson unearthed in Pepys,⁶² although Heywood's is the more complex. His professional duties, spiritual observances and bodily condition all

⁶¹ Ralph Josselin experienced a similar sensation, recording in 1656, 'P. Fast. wherein God was good in enlarging my heart in praying and preaching, affectionat(ly) moving my spirit, he in mercy moved my spirit, pardon my sin, accept my soule and doe mee good'. Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p. 67.

⁶² Dawson, 'Histories and Texts', pp.425-7.

fluctuate and, what is more, the fluctuations of each has direct consequences for the others. The weakening of his body and the measures he takes to recover his health impinge on his ability both to survive financially and to perform his ministerial duty by effectively conveying divine truth.

Such note taking, however, is only one aspect of Heywood's life-writing. The later volumes of his papers give an excellent working example of the process. The fourth volume was transcribed by Turner in two sections, spread across different volumes of his edition, both entitled Heywood's 'Event Book'.⁶³ In fact, the notebook from which Turner gathered these materials presents sets of notes, systematically collected under a series of headings: 'Solemne Covenants' (resolutions to return to his Puritan duties prompted by moments of misfortune), 'Experiences' (diaristic notes describing people and events encountered in Heywood's ministerial life), 'Returns of Prayer' (examples of Heywood receiving relief from afflictions and misfortunes after prayer), 'Observable Providences' (examples of God's benevolence to Heywood) and 'Remarkable Providences relating to Others' (examples of God's benevolence to others). The volume also contains some diaristic notes and records of various non-conforming clergymen.⁶⁴ The fifth volume contains a further set of descriptions of misfortunes that have befallen Heywood's acquaintances,⁶⁵ and the sixth carries another set of covenants which develop into annual reviews of his spiritual observances and providential treatment between 1682 and 1701.⁶⁶ A set of 'Self-reflections' begins from the back of the book running inwards. Volume VII contains notes under the heading 'Experiments with Reflections'.⁶⁷

⁶³ See Turner, I, pp.305-62 and III, pp.103-213.

⁶⁴ BL, MS. Add. 45966.

⁶⁵ BL, MS. Add. 45967. This volume is reproduced in full by Turner under the title 'Mr Heywood's Rawson Volume: 1678-1682'. Turner, II, pp.237-303.

⁶⁶ BL, MS. Add. 45968. Transcribed at Turner, III, pp. 214-285 and III, pp.286-302.

⁶⁷ BL, MS. Add. 45969. Transcribed at Turner, III, pp.303-350.

The process of compartmentalising his daily experiences was evidently important to Heywood's reflecting on his health. Suffering an illness while preaching in June 1677, he recorded the experience under his list of Temptations. Heywood was 'preaching and praying affectionately', reporting, although 'my heart was warmed yet my body was disordered'. The physiological burden of preaching was sometimes onerous. The previous day having been a fast day, bodily disorder was not unusual, and Heywood offered a brief sketch of his physical response to such ceremonies.⁶⁸ Normally, he spent 'such days laying out myself more then ordinary in pleading with god, weeping and extending my spirit' and, as a result, 'usually the morning after I am violently assaulted with a sad fit of head-ach, being now not so well able to abide it as I haue been'.⁶⁹ As a consequence, Heywood often found that:

I haue a temptation to abate and remit of my zeal and fervency in devotion, and to be more moderate as I see others are, and that word comes in oft I will haue mercy and not sacrifice, but when I consider of the saints weeping, pouring out their souls like water before the Lord, crying mightily, effectual fervent prayers, being in an agony in the duty, and withall consider the curse upon these that doe the work of the Lord negligently, I dare not doe otherwise, if god help, whatever becomes of this poor carcasce —⁷⁰

The purpose of noting this episode of illness was not that it was especially significant on its own terms, but rather that its circumstances prompted Heywood to reflect on his devotional duty and the temptation to dampen his fervour at times of physical discomfort (as Rich had prayed for her devotional burden to be simplified). As it progresses, the note gathers rhetorical momentum, adducing the Biblical phraseology of saints' souls poured out 'like water before the Lord' and piling devotional verb upon

⁶⁸ Josselin also found that fasting posed physical challenges for his preaching. At the end of 1646, he recorded, 'Monthly fast. I preachd but once, my heart is dull, and my body out of tune, the lord my god helpe and pardon and forgive and sanctify my spirit, and heale my soule and the nacion and delight in mee to doe mee good'. Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.82.

⁶⁹ BL, MS. Add. 45966, f.31r.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

devotional verb ('weeping, pouring... crying... being in an agony in the duty').⁷¹ Such oratorical habits perhaps sprung readily to Heywood's pen, and it is perhaps no coincidence that his prose becomes more flamboyant as he urges himself after fasting not to compromise his zeal in the pulpit. However, it is also important to remember that Heywood is not, in this crescendoing passage, asserting his singular identity in illness. Rather, he is seeking to follow a prescribed model – that of saints suffering religious agony to the glory of God – which enables him to observe passionate obedience in doing 'the work of the Lord'.⁷²

Other types of illness, though substantially similar, were recorded with different purposes under different headings. Having accepted a preaching engagement early in 1673 at the village of Lascelles Hall, three miles east of Huddersfield, Heywood found himself beset by 'a sad cold, in a stopping cough, hoarsnes' and, he notes, 'JB apothecary and other friends had set my wife on to dissuade me from going'.⁷³ A dispute ensued between Heywood and his wife (Abigail, née Crompton, whom he had married in 1667) which – in spite of medical advice and Abigail's 'affection' and 'teares' – concluded with Heywood making the journey. He arrived late, but preached to a packed church (his audience even containing 'two gentlemen, that had been great opposers') and 'god helped beyond expectation in my body & hart in preaching praying much affection stirred'.⁷⁴ Again, the assistance he receives in his preaching is physical; body and heart are assisted and his 'affection stirred'. That evening, lodging with an acquaintance, 'the

⁷¹ The phrase 'pouring out their souls like water' originates with Lamentations 2:19, which in the *King James Bible* is given as 'Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord'. The anglican clergyman William Perkins quotes this verse as 'The people of Israel being in grieuous affliction· How do they pray? *They powre out their souls like water before the face of the Lord*. Lam. 2. vers. 19'. William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Lords Praier in the Way of Catechisme* (London: Walde-graue, 1593), p.13.

⁷² Examples of this kind of typological behaviour will recur, especially in Chapters 2 and 4.

⁷³ BL, MS. Add. 45966, f.45r.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

house was filled with people'; Heywood 'expounded a chapter' and, again, 'god wonderfully helpt'.⁷⁵ He concluded the entry by recording:

I returned home on friday morning better in health than when I went from home, – I found that promise made good to me in this journey psal 37 5 : pro 3 5 6: 16 3: it was a satisfaction to all, the waving it would haue been a sad disappointment and of bad consequence in all likelihood.⁷⁶

As I have said, Heywood's methodologies for recording this episode and the illness after fasting are similar. His purpose in both cases is to express the importance of submission to God's will rather than to his own whims or the advice of others. His exhortation to himself is not to prioritise bodily health and comfort above the service of God.⁷⁷ In both cases, he uses scriptural types (in one the example of saints, in the other Old Testament ordinances) to prescribe and justify his behaviour and, in both examples, he favours adherence to Biblical models above the expression of his own opinions and desires. Both offer guidance for his future behaviour, but still they are categorised differently: the illness after fasting being recorded under 'Temptations', the trip to 'Lascelles Hall' under 'Experiences'. The meaningful distinction seems to be that the first example concerns an imagined, mental experience and the second a real, biographical one. 'Experiences' was the heading under which Heywood kept his most diaristic notes, with other titles indicating more meditative records. A conventional style of diary-keeping which sought evidence of God's providence in the life of the diarist was perfectly suited to rendering the experience in Yorkshire. Recording his imaginary digressions and distilling religious use from them, on the other hand, required an acknowledgement that such intellectual exercises had the capacity to be sinful and needed a more cautious

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ He gives the following scriptural references to support his exhortation. Psalms 37:3: 'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass'; Proverbs 3:5-6: 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths'; and Proverbs 16:3: 'Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established'.

approach as transgressive 'Temptations' rather than providential 'Experiences'.

At the end of each year, Heywood made reviews of his 'condition',⁷⁸ mostly recorded as Special Covenants. Towards the end of 1699, approaching the age of seventy, he took stock of his health, reporting severe shortness of breath even making the short walk to his chapel or climbing the stairs to his chamber. On lying in bed, he complained, 'I pant a considerable time and cough and oftimes my water comes from me with motion'.⁷⁹ But the main thrust of his reflections was that, for all this,

1 I have not any disease, runnings, or acute pain of stone strangury gout – as
many of my brethren have and as my dear brother had
2 I sleep well most of the night and haue not caughing whezing and am
refreshed and haue ease all the day and study comfortably
3 I can pray and preach as long and as loud as ever, that I feel nothing of
ailing to myself and no body can discern any thing I ail
4 I haue not the oppertunitys of travelling abroad as formerly, but when I doe
travel little journeys I ride with much ease and safety blessed be god
5 I haue a sweet comfortable wife that takes great care of me, provides sack,
and yoke of egge every morning and all other conveniences
6 I haue a competence of worldly yerly incomes more then ever I expected
deserved or so much as desired, when many better then I are in want –
7 Aboue all I humbly hope god hath given me an interest in himself and doth
help me morning and evening in secret to pour out my soul to him⁸⁰

The exercise returns Heywood to book-keeping – its practice of keeping running totals and tallying up at the year's end. Of course, it is a loaded kind of book-keeping in which the mercies of God are organised into a numbered list and his physical punishments cramped into a sentence, but it is, nonetheless, an act of book-keeping that gives equivalence to benefits, be they material ('yerly incomes'), familial ('a sweet comfortable wife'), physical ('not any disease') or devotional ('I can pray and preach'). That methodology again prevents Heywood from straying too far into imaginative terrain, seeking God's providence in measurable quantities – wealth, health, marital

⁷⁸ 'Condition' was a word he used frequently, and seemed to be capable of referring to various things including his health, wealth family life and social position.

⁷⁹ BL, MS. Add. 45968, f.70r.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

status – rather than in imaginative ones. Only the final point on his list approaches the speculative. His prayer of humble hope that 'god hath given me an interest in himself and doth help me morning and evening in secret to pour out my soul to him' is redolent of Heywood's reflection on his disordered body after fasting, in that it acknowledges the need to be kept mentally on the straight and narrow. Heywood aggregates the details of his life and reflects on them in a systematic manner at appointed times. Digressions from that practice (such as those recorded under the heading 'Temptations') are clearly labeled as such, noted for their observational, spiritual value, but not taken into account at the end of year reckoning of his 'condition'.

RALPH JOSSELIN

The Essex clergyman Ralph Josselin's diary was less textually systematic than the notebooks of Heywood, his entries less formally prescribed than Rich's. His diary does, however, in its obsessively detailed focus, exemplify the paradox of Puritan diary-writing: that it was produced by a belief-system fundamentally sceptical about the impious tendencies of the individual imagination yet obsessively focused on God's hand in the personal life of the diarist.

Starting to make regular entries in the 1640s, Josselin kept his diary, day by day, as a single, continuous text for over forty years, a feat of some stamina by comparison to other seventeenth-century journals. Six years of Margaret Hoby's diary survive; Hooke's extant diaries cover a period of eight years plus two one-year fragments; Pepys's diary lasted nine years;⁸¹ and Rich kept up her diary for eleven. Only Heywood comes close to matching Josselin's duration and, as we have seen, his life-notes were

⁸¹ Pepys began a second diary in the 1680s during his trip to Tangier. See *Letters and the Second Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R.G. Howarth (London: Dent, 1932).

not so concerted or consistent. Josselin's diary survives in a leather-bound octavo volume, stamped on both covers with the Royal coat of arms and the initials G and K.⁸² It is written in a small, clear hand but is not a fair copy. The handwriting deteriorates as Josselin ages, and the entries – several per week between the 1640s and 1660s – become less numerous and more brief in his final decade of life. The manuscript is in private hands. Although its history of ownership has been erratic, its current owner, Geoffrey Probert, is a descendent of the Harlackenden family, the seventeenth-century squires of Earls Colne, Essex, where Josselin was vicar between 1641 and his death in 1683.

Over four decades, Josselin used his diary to make relentless assertions of God's providence in the utmost minutia of his life. In 1644, he recorded, 'Stung I was with a bee on my nose, I presently pluckt out the sting, and layd on honey, so that my face swelled not, thus divine providence reaches to the lowest things. lett not sin oh Lord that dreadfull sting bee able to poyson mee'.⁸³ Illness to Josselin, however trivial, was providential and an incitement to pious reflection on the state of his soul. Although he seldom ascribed an episode of illness to a specific misdemeanour, his belief that 'divine providence reaches to the lowest things' is evident in the very careful detail with which he recorded his symptoms both troublesome and trivial. A rare example of his attributing effect to cause demonstrates Josselin's belief in the precision with which God could dispense illness as a divine punishment: 'I was over night ill with a paine in my side about my heart. I was at chesse with Mr H. my heart checkt mee for it for I was not fully provided for the worke of the next day'.⁸⁴ More commonly, though, illness is

⁸² Presumably in light of Josselin's involvement with the Parliamentary army, the editor of an early (drastically abridged) edition of Josselin's diary speculated that 'doubtless this cover belonged originally to some other book'. E. Hockliffe, ed., *The Diary of the Rev. Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1908), p.v.

⁸³ Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.19.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p.53. That chess was regarded as sinful in Puritan circles is expressed in an anonymous letter from 'a minister to his friend', published as a broadside in 1680, explaining that chess (among other things) 'is a great Time-waster', has 'caus'd me to break many solemn Resolutions, nay Vows and

accounted for as a punishment for a non-specific crime, most often one of the “vanities of mind” for which Josselin frequently berates himself, although he gives only hints at that phrase's meaning.⁸⁵ In 1647, he complained, 'I lord, have my bitter rootes of minde vanity and pollucion which thou knowest, make mee watchfull and jealous'⁸⁶ and, in 1650, he reported, 'god was good in keeping mee from my base lusts oh that every vanity of minde might bee rooted up'.⁸⁷ In 1658, he incited God to use the illness of his daughter Anne, 'as an advantage to my spirit, against the evill and vanity of my minde'.⁸⁸

But divine punishment is not always so precise as a temporary pain in the heart delivered as an enjoinder not to be distracted by chess. At its most severe, it confronts Josselin with the deaths of two of his children within a week. The loss of his daughter Mary moved Josselin unusually, and he wrote about it at greater length than about any of his five other children's deaths.⁸⁹ Mary, he said, 'was a pretious child, a bundle of myrrhe, a bundle of sweetness, shee was a child of ten thousand, full of wisdom, woman-like gravity, knowledge, sweet expre[ssions of god, apt in her learning,] tender hearted and loving, an [obed]ient child [to us]. it was free from [the rudenesse of] litle children, it was to us as a boxe of sweet ointment, which now its broken smells more deliciously then it did before, Lord I rejoyce I had such a present for thee, it was patient in the sicknesse, thankefull to the admiracion; it lived desired and dyed lamented, thy

promises' and that his 'using of it hath been scandalous and offensive to others'. *A Letter from a Minister to his Friend Concerning the Game of Chesse* (London: Parkhurst, 1680).

⁸⁵ In an unusual example of Heywood's being more specific than Josselin, after a fall from his horse, he 'reflected upon what I was thinking of when I fell, and I had been thinking of the great companys that came from Halifax to Coley that day before, and pleasing myself with imagining what a great assembly I should haue if god graunt liberty in the chappel – and methought that was a seasonable correction of my pride'. BL, MS. Add. 49566, f.36r.

⁸⁶ Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p. 90.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p.189.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p.428.

⁸⁹ On death of his first son named Ralph (after ten days), Josselin is medically precise but hardly loquacious, reporting, 'it breathed out the soule with 9 gaspes and dyed; it was the youngest and our affections not so wonted unto it.' Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.113. When his daughter Anne died, he wrote 'This morning after 2 of the clocke my deare Ann in her twentieth year died with mee at Colne, a good child, following her brother to London. and from thence hither to lie in his grave, loving in their lives and in their deaths they were not divided. lying in the same grave(.) Ibid, p.568.

memory is and will be sweete unto mee'.⁹⁰ Mary died on 27 May 1650 and her brother Ralph on 2 June. Twelve days after his son's funeral, Josselin wrote:

god helpes us under our great losses I am sometimes ready to bee overwhelmed in remembrance of my deare Mary, but when I eye my god, and thinke on his wisdom in all providences my heart is cheerd, and in her gaine I rejoyce, and indeed I would not have it otherwise, because it is my fathers will that it should bee so, onely the lord cleanse mee from my drosse throughly, and doe mee good which I trust he will, my heart seeth more into him, he is sweeter to mee. and my converse is more with him then formerly, my lusts and temptacions are not so violent, god in mercy not only chaine Satan, and restraine my corrupcons but subdue them also,⁹¹

This passage presents several core assumptions of Josselin's diary. The crimes for which he suffers greatest punishment seem predominantly to be thought crimes. In the main, these are the familiar vanities of thought (the content of which Josselin gives a further clue to here: 'lusts and temptacions'), but that category also includes his weakness in being liable to become 'overwhelmed' by grief for his daughter instead of remembering the inherent wisdom of God in removing her. Now, the paradox of Josselin's parallel self-abasement and self-assertion begins to show. His thoughts (both lusts and grief) are drosse of which he needs cleansing, while he celebrates his heaven-sent good cheer and so rejoices in the face of a tragedy that had moved him to uncusomary eloquence and self-examination. Josselin acknowledges, here, that the idea of the self is problematic; at one point, he prays to God to 'weeken my soule',⁹² as if his inner life and identity threaten the success of his devotional life.⁹³

What emerges is a model in which disease is a sort of caustic solution, stripping

⁹⁰ Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.203.

⁹¹ Ibid, p.207.

⁹² Ibid, p.56.

⁹³ The phrase 'weeken my soule' is not one of Josselin's many stock expressions, and nor does it appear to have common use elsewhere in seventeenth-century writing. In this case, perhaps Josselin uses 'soule' not in its spiritual meaning, but in one of the contexts OED gives as the word's third sense: either, 'The seat of a person's emotions, feelings, or thoughts; the moral or emotional part of a person's nature; the central or inmost part of a person's being', or, 'Strength of character; strongly developed intellectual, moral, or aesthetic qualities; spiritual or emotional power or intensity; (also) deep feeling, sensitivity.' Both of these senses were in contemporary use, though the second is the more modern, OED suggesting the word had Shakespearean coinage.

away Josselin's mental impurities to leave a core devotional self. The diary, with the systematic rigour of regular entry-keeping, is the forum in which Josselin sifts his chaotic mental world and attempts to construct an orderly, religious identity. The process of aggregating details of his life and reviewing them seems to work for Josselin. In 1657, he records, a 'Payne in my arme and body made mee more sensible of state then at some other time, opening my eyes to looke backe and see my faults, though none can understand his errors at the same time'.⁹⁴ Similarly, an illness of 1655 proved enlightening: 'I was very ill with cold, and ague in my tooth and face, the lord was good to mee, and my heart bore up on him, though I had not those present answers, I did verily hope to have received from him; I was learning thereby, who would sin against god, for his life, when a litle ilnes that may come next houre, will make it a burthen unto a man'.⁹⁵ In each of these examples, Josselin received a jolt to his perspective. The first saw him shaken out of self-aggrandisement into awareness of his faults and the second reminded him not to become so absorbed in seeking answers from God that he neglected to take precautions against sin. In each case the disease, as it is presented in the diary, steers Josselin from a possible deviation and, in each case, it wreaks its consequence as much on his mental world and spiritual practice as on his body.

The diary also proves the connection between devotional practice and physical health from the reverse perspective. In addition to amending his religious behaviour as a result of illness, Josselin also records instances of his curing physical ailments by prayer. In 1651, troubled by toothache, he treated himself by bleeding his gums 'much with a branch of rosemary, which made them sore, at night it aked very much'.⁹⁶ Josselin's cure had limited success and, that night, 'towards morning, my face swelled

⁹⁴ Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.402.

⁹⁵ Ibid, pp.342-343.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p.234.

and was sore, and the paine for present out of my tooth'.⁹⁷ The following day, again, 'my face swelled and pained, I looked up to god on Saturday at night, for rest strength, and mitigation of it that I might goe on in my Sabbath worke and he gave it not as I expected, but abating the swelling and almost removing of prayer a sweet mercy, but sweete is his goodwill to mee in answering my calling unto him'.⁹⁸ Such occasions of prayer alleviating disease are far less common in Josselin's diary than those of disease prompting a change in his outlook or behaviour. The example establishes Josselin as having a relationship to God in which he is more than a passive recipient of correction and reward. This weighs against the view of Josselin unwittingly being cleansed of his dross through disease, but he stops short of directly contradicting that, holding only that God responded to his prayers 'not as I expected', rather than claiming to have made a demand which was fully satisfied.

One explanation for Josselin's ability to make this claim might be that – although he uses the diary to scrutinise himself – he does not envisage a Cartesian division between his physical and mental selves. Rather, his case lends credence to the arguments of 'embodiment' critics who see early modern bodies and selves as fundamentally intertwined: God corrects Josselin mentally by acting on him physically. He speaks of his heart being 'sensible of my infirmities', remarking, 'there is healing in my god, I see it, nay thou wilt heale mee'⁹⁹ and, in an expression which seems especially to resound with Galenic psychopathology, describes 'the vaine boylings of my spirit,' asking God, 'oh throughly mortifie them'.¹⁰⁰ In 1650, making an assessment of his health over the past week, Josselin recorded, 'the Lord visited mee with a litle pose 2 dayes this

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.77.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.90. Josselin was not the only Puritan who sought to quell boiling spirits. The Warwickshire minister John Trapp also spoke of 'Patience' as a quality that 'quiets the boiling spirit, as Christ becalmed the raging sea'. John Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible* (London: Garthwait, 1650), p.270.

weeke, but I was no farther troubled with it, I was never freer from colds, I kept mee warme in nights, but never went thinner in dayes then I have done this winter'.¹⁰¹ But, he added, 'my dreames gave me matter of loathing this weeke, my heart is foule, and it vents even then'.¹⁰² Even when free of coughs, colds, aches and pains, Josselin imagines a physical process by which his heart (like Heywood's, loathsome) 'vents', causing bad dreams which are far more troubling symptoms.

In Josselin's understanding, spirits are physiological components that God manipulates to a moral purpose. His form of heart religion, requires him to remain physiologically open to Christian fellowship, while resistant to sinful infection. Early in the diary, he prays, 'oh Lord, give mee a spirit never to shutt up my bowells from my bretheren in distresse', where the bowels represent the seat of the tender emotions.¹⁰³ Philippians 2:1-2 orders 'If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind'. Thus, when Josselin speaks of 'the vaine boylings of my spirit', he appears to be imagining a biochemical process that is peculiar to his sinful body and hampers him from operating within this fellowship of the Spirit.

With these connections between Josselin's physical health and his inherent mental unruliness established, the point of the diary as an act of personal assessment becomes more apparent. Josselin prays to God, 'helpe me to watch my selfe continually',¹⁰⁴ where, by 'watch', he means that he wishes both to keep vigil over and apply checks upon himself. Illness plays a dynamic role in his self-scrutiny and

¹⁰¹ Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.187. Randle Cotgrave, *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: Islip, 1611) defines 'pose' as: 'A rheume, catharre, pose, murre.'

¹⁰² Josselin, *Diary* (1991), pp.187-188.

¹⁰³ Ibid, p.36. Thomas Wilson gives the definition, 'the most secret thoughtes and cogitations of the minde'. Thomas Wilson, *A Christian Dictionarie* (London: Jaggard, 1612), p.37.

¹⁰⁴ Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.151.

refinement: Josselin treats it as one of the media through which God communicates with him, writing of one episode of his persistent suppurating navel, 'this weeke my navel sore, I blesse god for it: if god will heale me of any corrupcion by his chastisement, is it not good, I see more into the deceit of my heart, my weaknes, heale me also oh god'.¹⁰⁵ Soon after, he noted again, 'when one trouble is over another succeeds, wherein I observe gods goodnes not to try with all at once, and indeed I ought not so much to desire remove this or that and thinke then all will be well, as submitt to all gods purposes and endeavours to gaine spiritually by all his providences'.¹⁰⁶ As well as showing disease's ability to enrich his spiritual life, these two examples see Josselin wrestling with that idea. In the first, he has to put to himself the rhetorical question, 'if god will heale me of any corrupcion by his chastisement, is it not good'? while the second reminds him that, although it is severe, meek submission to this correcting process is his best course of action. And, by arguing the diarist into acceptance of illnesses, rather than simply enumerating them, Josselin expands the framework of the aggregative model of book-keeping.

Sometimes, Josselin even seems to ask God to make him ill, demanding, 'I have beene free a great while, the lord by my health, and better me by corrections, for I need it'.¹⁰⁷ On another occasion, he writes, 'I have need of corrections oh my god. sanctifie them to mee, and doe mee good by them'.¹⁰⁸ This is a sophisticated kind of book-keeping; Josselin is not merely assessing his incomings and outgoings but, having done that and recognised a deficit, he is seeking to manipulate the flow of correction and reward to fit himself to a model of Puritan piety.

Of course these examples are not typical and, when he is ill, Josselin sometimes

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p.160.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.164.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.172.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.214.

finds that fear trumps devotional piety. But Josselin acknowledges the fact. During an acute episode of illness in 1654, he noted, 'at night I was very ill and afraid to die, its gods presence must actuate and strengthen my heart, or I can attain nothing of my selfe'.¹⁰⁹ Again Josselin does not merely record his illness and the moral lapse for which it might stand as punishment; he attempts to argue himself into pious acceptance. In the process, he demolishes his personal agency ('I can attain nothing of my selfe'), submitting to God who 'must strengthen my heart'. Next, he gives a practical demonstration that the illness has effected the necessary correction: 'I will make it my business to live too and with my god, and still desire his strength to bee perfected in my weaknes'.¹¹⁰

In his fifty-first year, Josselin acknowledged, 'lord I am wanting to thee and my selfe'.¹¹¹ He had made similar admissions before, but had never quite framed them in this way. That he should consider himself to have failed God should not be surprising, given the decades over which he recorded his derelictions of spiritual duty including 'vanities of thought' and other violations of inward piety. But his admission that he is wanting to 'my selfe' reveals something of the nature of Josselin's diary and its treatment of health. As I have explained, the diary presents a series of attempts by Josselin to abase and suppress his selfhood. He is mistrustful of his mental world, and the strictures of regular diary-writing appeared to offer a model for scrutinising God's interventions in his daily life without falling prey to self-reflection or 'vanities of thought'. Frequently he petitions for cleansing, sometimes borrowing from the lexicon of purification and evacuation: 'the lord purge my soule, and heale my nature, and sanctify mee as a chosen one to himselfe'.¹¹² Throughout, he regards his illness and healing as evidence of God's

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p.331.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.531.

¹¹² Ibid, p.53.

intercession on his behalf. In 1665, he noted, 'god good in outward mercies and yett his hand on us especially my self in a scab, and my spirit much ill, for which I humble myselfe before god and beg his pardon and grace'.¹¹³ The scabbing over of the wound in his leg which plagued Josselin's final decades is taken as a sign of providence, for which he humbles himself before God. But, as well as acts of humility, these episodes find Josselin paradoxically asserting his status as (in his own words) 'a chosen one to himselfe'. This sense of his individual significance begins to emerge from his comparison of his own health to that of his immediate circle: meditating on the afflictions of a number of friends, he prayed, 'lord help them, and make mee in their afflictions to reade my mercies'.¹¹⁴ Later, he noted, 'I heard from divers of my friends this weeke of their health: thus god continueth his favour to mee'.¹¹⁵ And Josselin certainly regards himself as receiving personalised treatment from God, though he often expresses the fact by formulaic means. 'God was good to mee and mine', or something like it, is a stock expression, cropping up multiple times on virtually every page of the diary. Although he regards the misfortunes he suffers and his protections as divinely ordained, his relationship to God is direct: God acts with Josselin specifically in mind. Given this personalised relationship, Josselin's diary can be read not only as seeking evidence of God's providence in his life through an accretion of biographical data, but also as performing a pious office by recording and manipulating that data, and even discoursing with God. His aim, in Isaac Ambrose's phrase, is to observe 'something of God to his soul, and of his soul to God'.¹¹⁶ Not only does Josselin address God directly¹¹⁷ (as many diarists, Pepys included, did) but, further, he assumes God as a reader of both

¹¹³ Ibid, p.516.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p.169.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p.212.

¹¹⁶ Ambrose, p.118.

¹¹⁷ In phrases such as 'oh lord my health and strength unto thee I look, to frame my heart unto thine owne heart', Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.251.

his diary and his thoughts. 'Lord thou knowest my faylings in rich mercy forgive them unto mee', he writes.¹¹⁸ The diary co-opts God's aid in fighting an enemy of which only he and Josselin are fully aware, as well as presenting Josselin at the fore of the battle against that enemy.¹¹⁹ Even when he cannot claim victory, he can perform his repentance in text: 'The lord in mercy give mee to consider of the vanity of my minde, in earthly imaginacions and give mee to endeavour faithfully against them, which I confesse I have not done, but pleased my selfe in ruminating on such fooleries. the lord give mee power against every evill for his mercy sake'.¹²⁰ His records of the corrections visited on him by God and his recoveries from illness and misfortune are stores of data enabling Josselin to analyse God's providence in his life. But, more than that, the act of inscribing those facts in his diary and repeating them in prescribed expressions over years and decades constitutes a practical act of devotion.

MARGARET HOBY

A more explicit example of diary-keeping as practical devotion is that of Margaret Hoby, who incorporated it into her daily religious life. Although the diary survives alone, Hoby's journal (now in the British Library) provides evidence that, like Rich and Heywood (as well as Pepys), she kept a number of notebooks, each assigned a different spiritual purpose. Its leaves – the first of which is badly damaged with approximately its upper third torn away, while the final leaf is missing its lower inside corner – are of a similar size to the journals of Rich and Josselin. It is written in a clear hand, and shows enough inconsistency from entry to entry in the size and shape of the characters, the colour of the ink and the thickness of the strokes, to establish that the text was written

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p.36.

¹¹⁹ 'I lord, have my bitter rootes of minde vanity and pollucion which then knowest, make mee watchfull and jealous that I bee not overcome with them'. Ibid, pp.90-91.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p.104.

cumulatively at the times of the events it records, rather than transcribed wholesale from notes. It is relatively clean but not a fair copy, with occasional corrections, crossings-out and ink blots.

The diary was not Hoby's only receptacle for regular life-writing. She refers to writing in a 'sarmon book',¹²¹ a habit shared by a number of seventeenth-century Puritans including Heywood.¹²² It is likely that this volume and the diary were only two elements of an organised network of personal note-keeping. An important part of Hoby's routine was self-examination, a process on which she sheds little light, but which Heywood explains, speaking of setting himself to 'the dutys of self examination, meditation, secret prayer, that I may take an account of my spirit and actings, to see how grace doth grow and increase, or decrease and decay how corruptions work within me, and also to beg pardon and assistance from god'.¹²³ A personal notebook would surely be able to assist in such a process, and Hoby does speak of having 'exercised my selfe at home in writinge, readinge and prainge'.¹²⁴

Hoby was born to a comfortable Yorkshire family and her surviving diary accounts for a six-year period during her third marriage, to Sir Thomas Posthumous Hoby, early in the seventeenth century. The diary holds to the model of domestic recording, and contains much detail about the running of Hoby's household in Hackness, North Yorkshire. It catalogues her domestic routines and religious observances, as well as giving details of her health and the medical treatments she prescribed to her circle and staff, for whose care she took responsibility.¹²⁵ A typical

¹²¹ BL, MS. Egerton 2614, f.18v. Notebooks containing sermon records were common. The physician Daniel Foote's book of sermon notes is now BL, MS. Sloane 594, and Gilbert Frevile's commonplace book, which contains extensive sermon notes (a text I will discuss in Chapter 4) is BL, MS. Egerton 2877.

¹²² See BL, MS. Add. 45965, ff.84r-89v for an example of Heywood keeping sermons notes.

¹²³ BL, MS. Add. 45966, f.5v.

¹²⁴ BL, MS. Egerton 2614, f.65v.

¹²⁵ For a discussion of Hoby's knowledge of herbal medicine, see Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority*

entry records these particulars in a matter-of-fact notation, giving equal rhetorical importance to Hoby's physical health and spiritual behaviour.¹²⁶

After priuatt praers I took a medesone and then I wrough and praied afer diner I was busie receiuinge rentes and at night I went to priuat examination and praier I supper then I went to publecke praers and so to bed beinge not well¹²⁷

Such cataloguing, which treats prayer and self-medicating as equivalent details of the domestic routine, surely suggests Hoby as a textbook example of a diarist, on Beadle's account, who was 'a Merchant adventurer', measuring 'returns' against 'vertues'. Certainly, Hoby regards her illnesses and recoveries as divinely ordained, using phrases such as, 'this day I thank god I was better then before'¹²⁸ and 'god hauinge a Litle afflicted me with sicknes for a great desart'.¹²⁹ And often she directly connects her spiritual practices or derelictions of them with the state of her health. When unable to enact her devotional regime to its full, she sends for help to supplement the missing pieties. During a sickness of March 1601, she recorded:

this day I kept my chamber and as I was able I wrought and reede and had Mr Adrington to read to me and Mr Rhodes, some time we sung psa: and, att my accustomed times, I went to priuat praier and medetation¹³⁰

Hoby is careful to record the schedule she observes and the ways in which she has departed from her routine.¹³¹ And, as well as noting her religious duties, Hoby used her

and Englishwomen's Herbal Texts, 1550-1650 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp.105-113.

¹²⁶ The equivalence Hoby sees between her spirituality and physicality is reflected in the diary's principle relationships, as demonstrated by Laroche, who examines Hoby's relationship with her physicians, Brewer and Lister, as central threads of the diary, and Mary Ellen Lamb, who examines Hoby's relationship with the minister Mr Rhodes. See Mary Ellen Lamb, 'Margaret Hoby's Diary: Women's Reading Practices and the Gendering of the Reformation Subject', in Sigrid King, ed., *Pilgrimage for Love: Essays in Honour of Josephine A. Roberts* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), 63-94.

¹²⁷ BL, MS. Egerton 2614, f.57v.

¹²⁸ Ibid, f.69v.

¹²⁹ Ibid, f.19r.

¹³⁰ Ibid, f.71r.

¹³¹ Julie Crawford, has argued that Hoby's engagement with her contemporary religious disputes was more active than this account of quiet, ritual piety might suggest. Her reading, says Crawford, 'corresponded with specific religious and regional concerns and debates in which she was actively concerned', adding that, 'when she chose texts as well as the people with whom she read them, she also chose both texts and readers with an eye toward religious and political influence'. Julie Crawford,

diary to give an account of her health. Indeed, recording her physical condition is a dominant activity in Hoby's self-scrutiny, though she is reluctant to read specific meanings into her illnesses. Like her records of self-examination, her memoranda of illness are often generic: in the early entries she almost never names her symptoms, speaking simply of 'my weaknes'¹³² or 'my sickness'.¹³³ Only when she is already a year into the surviving diary does she mention a symptom ('I was this day so ill with Could as I kept my Chamber')¹³⁴ and it is another eight months before she complains again, first, 'I had greate paine of the toothache',¹³⁵ and then, 'I was not well hauinge my face swollen with a rume'.¹³⁶ The trend did not develop and, by the end of the diary in 1605, by when the average length of the entries had significantly shortened, Hoby had returned to her previous practice. Her diary, it seems, was designed to be spiritually rather than medically diagnostic.

Among the more significant effects Hoby observed in illness were the restrictions it sometimes placed on her religious routine. 'This day I went to the Church but hauinge an Indisposition of Bodie I profitted not as I ought',¹³⁷ reads one late entry. And, at times when Hoby was most concerned with recording her symptoms, she seemed to experience tension between her incapacitation from keeping her diary and the wish to set down information about her illness. In November 1600, she recorded,

this day, the next day beinge the lordes day the :3:4:5:6: daies I was verie ill and weake with the toothache the :7: day I was some thinge better and so performed my exercises and dispatched Iurden fro hence with some letters & after I had praied and supper, I went to bed¹³⁸

'Reconsidering Early Modern Women's Reading, or, How Margaret Hoby Read Her de Mornay', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73:2 (2010), 193-223, p.194.

¹³² BL, MS. Egerton 2614, f.2v.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid, f.29r.

¹³⁵ Ibid, f.55v.

¹³⁶ Ibid, f.58r.

¹³⁷ Ibid, f.114v.

¹³⁸ Ibid, f.60r.

The same happened at the end of the year:

The 23:24:25 et 26 : daies I was not well of a great Colde so that I kept my chamber and went not in to my clositt and was visited by Mrs Thornborrowe euerie day¹³⁹

In each of these examples, ill health enforced a lacuna in the diary, and Hoby's remark that illness prevented her from going 'in to my clositt' suggests an equivalence between her diary-writing and her other devotional practices.¹⁴⁰ Usually, when unable to write, she filled in the gaps retrospectively;¹⁴¹ but, as the diary went on and the illnesses grew more severe, the spaces between entries became wider.¹⁴² Some instances of non-writing may have coincided with bouts of melancholy. It was Hoby's own maxim that, 'they are unworthy of godes benefittes and especiall fauours that can finde no time to make a thankfull recorde of them'.¹⁴³ She records consulting her physician on the matter of her emotional health ('I talked a whill with Mr Lister of som of my greues')¹⁴⁴ and one of the few non-spiritual books she mentions reading is Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholie*,¹⁴⁵ written, Bright says, to 'comfort them in that estate most comfortles'.¹⁴⁶

When she records periods of mental disorder, Hoby practises a more detailed and urgent brand of self-scrutiny:

¹³⁹ Ibid, f.65v.

¹⁴⁰ Crawford describes the closet as serving 'a variety of functions, including providing a place for scholarly transactions', records of these spaces, she reports 'testify to a recognition of the range of women's reading practices'. Crawford, 'Reconsidering Early Modern Women's Reading', p.204.

¹⁴¹ On 8 January, 1601 Hoby reports that 'after I Cam home I was pained in the toothach which Continewed with me 4 dayes after in which time I exercised prainge & reading as I was able, and tooke phisike of Doctor Lister who coming to se me the 4 day after my paine beinge the .12: day of this moneth told me of Lady Bedfords death'. BL, MS. Egerton 2614, f.67r.

¹⁴² During February 1601, the diary was a virtual write off. A single entry covers the period between 26 January and 19 February. Hoby only records 'from the :26: of Ianuarie unto the :8: of feb: I remained weake and so ill that I Could not goe out of my chamber'. On the 'Lordes day' (15 February) she reports hearing about the failed Essex rebellion against the government, and reports that she was 'not so ill tell the :16: day'. On 17 February she reports Thomas Lee's execution for his part in the Essex plot, and on 19 February the execution of the Earls of Essex and Southampton. On 20 February she resumes her habit of inscribing daily entries. (Ibid, f.69v).

¹⁴³ BL, MS. Egerton 2614, f.111v.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, f.56v.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, f.11r.

¹⁴⁶ Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (London: Vautrollier, 1586) sig.4r.

I praise god I had health of body how so euer Iustly god hath suffered satan to afflicte my mind yet my hope is that my redemer will bringe my soule out of troubles that it may praise his name and so I will wait wt patience for deliuerence¹⁴⁷

Given Hoby's reticence in invoking details of her illnesses, this is an unusually vivid account of mental discomfort. It marks the first of only four occasions in the diary on which she mentions Satan. The other three all come during this same period of mental unrest in the middle of 1603. The entry above was made in May and, at the end of June, Hoby says, 'Satan has not ceased to cast his mallice on me'.¹⁴⁸ In mid-July, she feels 'as though Satan would returne I felte his buffets'.¹⁴⁹ And, at the beginning of August, 'it pleased the Lord Iustly but yet mercifully to suffer satans buffets so that I had not the morning exercises so frutfully as I ought'.¹⁵⁰ She is careful to distinguish between her afflicted mind and the soul for whose salvation she is praying, and, while she accepts that God has justly allowed Satan to afflict her mind, she prays that her soul be protected. Although she returns to her customary terseness in the following paragraph,¹⁵¹ Hoby's rhetorical tactic in the throes of distress is to give up accounting for her health and salvation, and to make herself the subject of heavenly forces. Satan is a useful figure to invoke in this process, Hoby pitting herself squarely against him and so enabling herself to call God's aid in the fight. When Satan crops up in July – the example in which Hoby claims to have 'felte his buffets' – she is probably not speaking metaphorically: in this age when physiological and emotional experience are so closely connected, it is likely that she could have made the mental leap from having 'felte' something to rationalising it as a religious (or indeed irreligious) experience. Josselin

¹⁴⁷ BL, MS. Egerton 2614, f.96r.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, f.97r.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, f.97v.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, f.98r.

¹⁵¹ 'from the 6th unto the 20, I praise god, I continewed well, and found gods mercie in vouchsafinge me comfort euerie way'. Ibid, f.96r.

certainly believed his mind to have been afflicted by Satan,¹⁵² while Hoby has it that she is literally under Satanic attack and that God represents her only hope of protection. The details she gives suggest a more complex chain of command (God allowing Satan to act on Hoby), and her expressly placing God at the head of that chain seems to betray an anxiety not to present Satan as operating independently of or above God.¹⁵³ This implies some self-conscious effort by Hoby's afflicted mind to maintain the correct order of things. The diary provided a forum in which she could establish this order by transcribing it onto the page, and reassert her piety by placing herself in relation to God.

ROBERT HOOKE

Even though it takes a decidedly non-religious approach to self-scrutiny, Robert Hooke's diary has much in common with the Puritan texts of Hoby, Josselin, Heywood and Rich: it presents a similar torrent of minute personal data for scrutiny – in Hooke's case, the typical particulars of his entries included information about how well he slept each night, when his perspiration was more than usually heavy, even each time he ejaculated.

Two diaries survive in markedly different texts. The first, held in the London Metropolitan Archives, is a large folio volume with paper of a heavy grade, covering the period between 1672 and 1680.¹⁵⁴ Initially, the text was designed as a receptacle for

¹⁵² 'my heart still clogged with old corruptions, how cunningly Sathan endeavours to winde into mee', Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.64. 'I find Sathan like the lapwing crying before mee with one temptation or vanitie, to drawe my minde from my god of my salvation'. Ibid, p.134. Burton also speaks of devils physically occupying human bodies; quoting the sixteenth-century physician Jason Pratensis, he writes, 'the Divell, being a slender incomprehensible spirit, can easily insinuate and winde himself into humane bodies, and cunningly couched in our bowels vitiate our healths, terrify our soules with fearfull dreames, and shake our minde with furies'. Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas Faulkner, Nicolas Kiessling, Rhonda Blair, 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989-2009), I, pp.193-194.

¹⁵³ Again, Hoby appears to share her theology with Burton, who writes, 'God permits the Divell to appear in the forme of Crowes, & such like creatures, to scarre such as live wickedly here on earth.' Burton, I, p.188.

¹⁵⁴ London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/495/MS01758.

Hooke's meteorological observations,¹⁵⁵ and, in its early part, the recto pages are divided in two with a ruled line down the centre. The left-hand columns contain meteorological and astrological information, and the right-hand one notes on Hooke's daily activities. Initially the verso pages are blank except for occasional overspilling notes. In the very early pages, the entries are marked by a date in the left-hand margin with the weather notes and the biographical memoranda both appearing adjacent to the date number. After the sixth leaf, however, the biographical and meteorological notes fall out of sync and, twelve folios into the volume, Hooke abandons the practice of drawing columns. From the twenty eighth leaf, he writes on both recto and verso pages. The hand comprises small, informal characters consistent with Hooke's other papers and diaries.

The second diary, covering the years between 1688 and 1693, is held by the British Library, a much different bibliographical prospect.¹⁵⁶ It is a pocket-sized volume, nearly fifteen times smaller than the early journal. The pages have been disbound from their original books and mounted on stubs, and the presence of newer blanks between sections implies that the diary was originally three notebooks later bound together.

Felicity Henderson has pointed out that, in the early journal, the 'memoranda change in nature as the months go by'¹⁵⁷ and that the two diaries differ intrinsically, noting that the later volume 'is almost exclusively a notation of Hooke's daily activities'.¹⁵⁸ 'Even if Hooke did begin his memoranda as a philosophical exercise', she

¹⁵⁵ The habit of keeping a weather journal was not unusual. Locke recorded meteorological observations between December 1691 and December 1692 in a table which is now preserved as BL, MS. Sloane 4039, ff.261r-270v. Boyle's records of weather notes for the year 1664 and the period 1684-6 are held in the Royal Society as RB/2/19/5 and RB/2/21/11. Hooke wrote an essay describing 'A Method for the Making a History of the Weather', which is held in the Royal Society as RBC/2/39. In 1699, the Norfolk minister Samuel Clark gave a paper at the Royal Society presenting twenty-nine years' worth of weather observations, which are now held in the Society's archive as MS/366/4/5. Samuel Jeake's weather diary is held in Rye Museum, Selmes MS. 33.

¹⁵⁶ BL, MS. Sloane, 4024. The later diaries are also printed in Gunther, X, pp.69-265.

¹⁵⁷ Henderson, 'Unpublished Material from the Memorandum Book of Robert Hooke', p.130.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p.165 n.5.

argues, 'they soon became something much more private'.¹⁵⁹ This is undoubtedly so, but Hooke's personalised texts, especially the early diary, demand to be read with his intellectual methodology in mind. Lotte Mulligan has attempted this, arguing that Hooke's 'diary keeping was an integral part of his scientific vision reflecting the epistemological and methodological practices that guided him as a student of nature'. Most significant is that the subject of Hooke's experiment is himself: on Mulligan's account, Hooke 'chose to record a self that was as subject to scientific scrutiny as the rest of nature'; his aim being to produce 'a fully objective "history" with himself as datum'.¹⁶⁰

Hooke's diary bears similarity to those of Josselin and Hoby in its presentation of the minutiae of the diarist's daily experiences. The diary presents a thorough catalogue of Hooke's medical complaints, their symptoms, the medicines he took and, frequently, the waste substances he expunged. Like the diaries of Rich, Josselin and Hoby, Hooke's diary attempts to ignore questions of personal identity, in favour of scrutinising the influence of external factors upon his body.

That Hooke regarded his health as a source of scientific data was evident in the equivalence he gave to observations of his body and his formal scientific work. In February 1674, he reported, 'At Spanish coffee house tryd new mettall, with Antimony, ♂ and ♀. At Shortgraves. Tryd reflex microscope & c.'¹⁶¹ And, using the data set that his body and physic-taking provided, Hooke performed a number of experiments on himself, taking a variety of medical preparations in an attempt to heighten his mental acuity. In May 1674, he reported:

Took Childs vomit, Infusion *Croc. Met.* I 3. Wrought pretty well. Refreshed by

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p.130.

¹⁶⁰ Lotte Mulligan, 'Self-Scrutiny and the Study of Nature: Robert Hooke's Diary as Natural History', *The Journal of British Studies*, 35:3 (1996), 311-342, p.312.

¹⁶¹ Hooke, *Diary*, p.85.

it. DH. Made description of quadrant. Lost Labour. Slept after dinner. A strange mist before my eye. Not abroad all day. Slept little at night. Dinner. My Fantcy very cleer¹⁶²

Hooke's experiment seems to be an attempt to enhance his effectiveness as a natural philosopher by drug-taking. He records the prescription he used and its effect on his work rate ('Made description of quadrant. Lost Labour'), his sight, which Hooke held to be the principal observational tool of the scientist¹⁶³ ('A strange mist before my eye'), and his imaginative faculties ('My Fantcy very cleer'), as well as giving some details of his health ('Not abroad all day. Slept little at night').

Physic-taking and physical symptoms appear in virtually every entry of Hooke's diary, offering an easy ascription of effect to cause. In January 1673, he 'took a clyster' which made him 'very ill and giddy', causing him to experience 'The worst night I ever yet had, melancholy and giddy, shooting in the left side of my head above ear'.¹⁶⁴ But, additionally, keeping a diary allowed Hooke to supplement his (according to Aubrey) weak memory.¹⁶⁵ For Hooke, ensuring accurate recollection of his experiments was important to his philosophical method; he considered memory a physical organ that could be assisted prosthetically:¹⁶⁶ 'The Soul can no more remember without the Organ of Memory', he wrote, 'than it can see without the organ of Sight, the Eye, or hear without an Ear.'¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Ibid, p.105.

¹⁶³ Introducing *Micrographia*, he urges his readers 'not absolutely to rely upon these Observations of my eyes, if he finds them contradicted by the future Ocular Experiments of sober and impartial Discoverers'. *Micrographia* (London: Martyn and Allestry, 1665), sig.b1r.

¹⁶⁴ Hooke, *Diary*, p.24.

¹⁶⁵ John Aubrey, *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949), p.165.

¹⁶⁶ The idea can also be found in Descartes' *Passions of the Soul*, which holds that 'when the soul wants to remember something, this volition makes the gland lean first to one side and then to another, thus driving the spirits towards different regions of the brain until they come upon the one containing traces left by the object we want to remember'. Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, I, pp.343-344.

¹⁶⁷ *The Posthumous Works of Robert Hooke*, ed. Richard Waller (London: Smith and Walford, 1705), p.140. Hooke's theory was that sense data were transported to the 'Repository or Storehouse' where the soul forges them into ideas. This action of the soul, he explains, 'is that which is commonly called *Attention*'. On Hooke's scheme, 'the Soul in the Action of Attention does really form some material Part of the Repository into such a Shape, and gives it some such a Motion as is from the Senses

Hooke's plan was to be rigorously honest in recording all aspects of his life. As Henderson notes, Hooke's posthumous editor, Richard Waller, refers to another 'small Pocket-Diary' of Hooke's (a still-later journal than the British Library's volume), in which he announced his intention 'to write the History of my own Life', declaring that his raw materials for that task were to be 'such Memorials as I have kept in Writing' alongside 'the Registers of the ROYAL SOCIETY' and 'all my Inventions, Experiments, Discoveries, Discourses, etc.'¹⁶⁸ In writing up his philosophical experiments and discoveries, Hooke proposed to give details as to 'the time when, the manner how, and means by which, with the success and effect of them', he proposed also to account for 'the state of my Health, my Employments and Studies, my good or bad Fortune, my Friends and Enemies, etc'.¹⁶⁹ His habit of recording his ejaculations (noted by the symbol of Pisces (♊), and often registered beside a name – usually that of his maid Nell, or his niece Grace) indicates the level of candour he sought to invest in the text.¹⁷⁰

But, as a practical aide-mémoire, Hooke's text must have had limitations. Henderson observes that, 'One of the main problems with the memoranda as a useful record of events is the lack of an easy method of retrieval'.¹⁷¹ Even a first glance at Hooke's manuscripts reveals a dense and convoluted document. In both texts, fragments

conveyed thither; which being so formed and qualified, is inserted into and enclosed in the common Repository, and there for a certain time preserved and retained, and and so becomes an Organ, upon which the Soul working, finds the Ideas of past Actions, as if the Action were present'. Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Richard Waller, 'The Life of Dr. Robert Hooke', in *Posthumous Works*, sig.b1r.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ The diary implies that Hooke had embarked upon a sexual relationship with Grace. On 14 June 1676, he recorded 'Slept with Grace' (Hooke, *Diary*, p.237) and on 16 October that year, the diary reports, '♊ Grace in Bed'. Ibid, p.253. The twentieth-century editors of Hooke's diary glossed the Pisces symbol as representing Hooke's orgasms, 'probably because of the association of Venus and Cupid in the legendary origin of the symbol'. Ibid, p.1. Rhodri Lewis, prefers the term ejaculations, observing, 'One of Hooke's many virtues was his immunity to cant: he was a man who "pissed". The Pisces characters denote the occasions on which he ejaculated'. Rhodri Lewis, 'Hooke at 371', *Perspectives on Science*, 14:4 (2006), 558-573, p.565n. Following this practice, Henderson explains her own preference for the term ejaculation, remarking, 'Hooke presumably recorded this as part of his ongoing appraisal of his own health, rather than as a record of his sexual activity'. Henderson, 'Unpublished Material from the Memorandum Book of Robert Hooke', p.167n.

¹⁷¹ Henderson (2007), p.130.

of sentences run into one another to fit the available page space. Added to which, the diaries' contents are widely various. In among variably meticulous accounts of his health and physic-taking, Hooke includes recipes, as well as tall stories and gossip he happens to pick up, always careful to note the source of rumour or advice. On 31 January 1675, as well as noting that he had dined at home, 'cut de Witts world for pocket book', and 'Writ additions to *Animadversions*', Hooke also recorded: 'Hewk told me the receipt of the aldersgate cordiall. Sena, coriander seeds, Elecampane, Guacu, Liquorice, brandy and white wine, Raisins'.¹⁷² The effect of this mixture of detailed note-keeping, punctuated by personal observation, is to create a manuscript that is very difficult to read. The cramped layout and anti-rhetorical, shorthand style lend themselves to density instead of clarity. The text was evidently conceived for Hooke's eyes alone, with not the slightest concession made to later readers. Nor can the diary's priorities be straightforwardly discerned. Although the early diary, as it gathers momentum, develops increasing interest in the details of Hooke's life rather than the meteorological data it set out to record, it does not necessarily give privilege to biographical details. Information that might later have been useful to Hooke's 'History' of his life competes with items of philosophical curiosity. Early in 1672, Hooke noted the circumstances of his friend John Wilkins's illness and eventual death from a kidney stone. He seemed less moved by the loss than fascinated by the details of Wilkins's condition:

Lord Bishop of Chester dyed about 9 in the morning of a suppression of urine. Dr. Wren here at Dionis Backchurch. Dind at the Bear in Birchen Lane with Dr. Wren, Controuler, Mr. Fitch. At Jonas Mores, sick, he was cured of a sciatica by fomenting the part for an hour with hot steames for one hour afterward chafing in oyles with a rubbing hand and heated firepans which gave him a suddain ease. Sir Theodore Devaux told me of Sir Th. Meyerns

¹⁷² Hooke, *Diary*, p.144.

cure of the stone in the kidneys by blowing up the bladder with bellows etc.¹⁷³

At some point in the diary's history, the phrase 'Lr Bp of Chester Dyed about 9 in ye morning'¹⁷⁴ has been underlined in red pencil. There is no reason to assume this mark was made by Hooke, but whoever drew the line, it indicates a reading of this dense text in search of biographical details that were relatively scarce.¹⁷⁵ Hooke's priority in recording Wilkins's death is medical: from the event he discovers a method of healing sciatica and one of curing kidney stones.

If Hooke wished to present a truly complete case history of himself, his own 'General Scheme' for the improvement of Natural Philosophy offered advice. In a general schema for writing up scientific observations, he offered a set of prescriptions with which the diary bears comparison. The journal appears to conform to the first stage of scientific record-keeping, by which observations are taken down quickly in shorthand in an attempt to register every salient detail before it becomes lost to, or distorted by, the memory. Only later, Hooke recommends, should the evidence be transcribed onto 'a very fine piece of paper' and entered 'in the most compendious manner of writing'¹⁷⁶ (as he proposed to do by writing up 'the History of my own Life'). Hooke's surviving manuscripts appear to contain a rough and immediate handlist of experience. If anything, the manuscript for the late diary is written in a slightly more careful hand and its entries are more clearly discrete (perhaps necessities imposed by the small size of the notebooks into which Hooke was writing his experiences).

Given their practical purpose, it is no surprise that the records of Hooke's illnesses and the treatments he used resound with certainty:

¹⁷³ Ibid, p.13.

¹⁷⁴ This is how the phrase appears in the unpaginated manuscript, rather than in Robinson and Adams' transcription.

¹⁷⁵ Occasional underlinings in red pencil occur throughout the early diary, though not with regularity.

¹⁷⁶ Robert Hooke, 'A General Scheme of Idea of the Present State of Natural Philosophy', in *Posthumous Works*, pp.1-70, pp.63-4.

Yesternight, I woke with an intollerable pain in head which I found to be from having cut my hair a week before and not put on a thicker cap, but upon keeping my head warmer recovered.¹⁷⁷

This entry appears to bear out Mulligan's notion of Hooke's diary as 'a fully objective "history" with himself as datum'. His commitment to trial and error continues, as he discovers a problem (headache) and develops an experiment to establish a diagnosis, proceeding from hypothesis (that it was caused by a cold head) to proof (warming his head relieved the pain). For all Hooke's enthusiasm for experimental method, his ascription of his symptoms to coldness suggests Galenism. According to Culpeper's 1652 edition of Galen, taking cold at the head was liable to alter a patient's temperament and perhaps, therefore, to impede him or her from taking the detached, observational stance Hooke sought in his diary: 'The Brain afflicted with cold and moist distempers, moves a man to an inexpugnable desire of sleep, and when he is awake, his Brain is so muddy, and his Sences so dull, that he can do nothing that will get him honor here, nor make him famous another day, the excrements that flow from his Brain are abundance, he seldom goes without a snotty Nose, his Head is full, though not of Wit, and heavy, and is most afflicted in cold and moist weather'.¹⁷⁸ Hooke, although he is holding to an untested orthodoxy about the medical effects of heat and cold, grounds his claim in certainty. There is no doubt in his mind that it was his hair being cut and the thinness of his cap that put him into such severe pain. On another occasion, he recorded,

Eat Dinner with good stomack and pannado at night but drinking posset upon it put me into a feverish sweat which made me sleep very unquiet.¹⁷⁹

Again, Hooke evinces a certainty that, on re-reading, could serve as a warning for future behaviour. There are possibilities he does not acknowledge. Hooke's posset¹⁸⁰ might

¹⁷⁷ Hooke, *Diary*, p.36.

¹⁷⁸ Galen, *Galen's Art of Physick* trans. Nicholas Culpeper (London: Cole, 1652), p.25.

¹⁷⁹ Hooke, *Diary*, p.26.

¹⁸⁰ John Wilkins's definition is 'Broth of coagulated milk'. John Wilkins, 'An Alphabetical Dictionary', in *An Essay Towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language* (London: Gellibrand and Martin,

have been the cause of his discomfort but so might the panado,¹⁸¹ and he was likely to have been drinking posset because he was unwell in the first place.¹⁸² But, in Hooke's accounting, there was no doubt that the effect ('feverish' sweating and interrupted sleep) proceeded from a particular cause (a surfeit of drinking).

Scrutinising his body for plain medical facts was the business of Hooke's diary, just as Josselin's performed a comparable act searching for signs of providence. Like the Puritan diarists, Hooke sought to record details of his life and illnesses in as forensic a manner as possible. Mulligan argues that 'Hooke's diary is singularly unconcerned to present the self in any conventional role'.¹⁸³ But, while his diary does not represent, as Josselin's and Hoby's do, an investigation of the diarist's standing in God's sight, it does, like those texts, assess his social standing, giving some of his relationships more assiduous attention than others.

Hooke's acquaintance with Pepys, for instance,¹⁸⁴ held far less interest than his friendship with Boyle, from whom he often received medical advice. In January 1673, Hooke went to Boyle for a prescription of Spirit of hartshorn, and to ask the chemist 'to advise me about oyle &c'.¹⁸⁵ Soon after, Boyle advised Hooke that '*Stercus humanum* [human excrement] dryed and blown into the eye was an excellent powder to take of filmes and cloudes from the eye'.¹⁸⁶ The relationship continues throughout the diary with the two men giving and receiving information and showing off their experiments. And,

1668).

¹⁸¹ 'Crummes of bread (and currans) moistened, or brewed with water'. Cotgrave, *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*.

¹⁸² Elsewhere in the diary he seems to use posset as a sleeping draught, reporting on one occasion, 'Drank pippin posset, slept pretty well' (Hooke, *Diary*, p.13), on another, 'Eat Slack posset. Lost all day' (ibid, p.16), and soon after that, 'Drank posset. Slept well'. Ibid, p.23.

¹⁸³ Mulligan, p.316.

¹⁸⁴ In September 1676, he described Pepys as 'very civill and kind', (Hooke, *Diary*, p.248), but two months later noted, 'Mr Pepys master of Trinity House made a long speech to noe great purpose'. Ibid, p.263.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p.21.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p.26.

in 1676, Hooke hints at a greater intimacy between the two than a mere exchange of medical advice, noting, 'At Mr. Boyle read French booke, he would not to the Clubb'.¹⁸⁷

This brief note is interesting both because it reveals a moment of the relationship between Hooke and Boyle which, of necessity, was shared in private. Significantly, Hooke breaks his usual habit here. He does not record whether anything of interest came from the book; more significant than its contents was the experience of private reading with Boyle. Normally, Hooke's approach to recording his personal relationships was utilitarian. His relationship with Boyle is mostly reported through experimental observations shared between them. Similarly, with Wren, he discusses the tomb of the Etruscan king Lars Porsena,¹⁸⁸ and with Francis Lodwick, he discusses *a priori* languages.¹⁸⁹ Boyle is unusual as a figure with whom he both claims personal intimacy and shares information. Several explanations might account for this, Boyle's preeminence among the group being one. Mainly, however, Hooke's journal presents the diarist as a member of a community of peers exchanging information, offering it as a text that assesses, among other things, Hooke's social standing rather than expressing his subjectivity as its author. His descriptions of his illnesses, in this context, stand both as memoranda of effective treatments, applicable in future episodes of ill-health, and as records of personal medical discoveries that could be circulated within his intellectual community.

SAMUEL JEAKE

The Sussex merchant and astrologer, Samuel Jeake, kept a diary during the later decades of the seventeenth century, investigating the astral causes of his life events. Astrological

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p.242.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p.327 and pp.320-321.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p.69.

journals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries took pains to record illnesses and symptoms, as well as the dates and times at which they presented, to establish their astral origins. This tradition appears to have been influenced by the practices of John Dee, who annotated his copies of astrological almanacs with notes about his personal life that were later compiled and published as his diary.¹⁹⁰ Dee's notes are little concerned with his own sickness, but make much mention of the accidents that befell members of his family. On 27 June 1591, he recorded of his son, 'Arthur wovnded on his hed by his own wanton throwing of a brik-bat upright, and not well avoyding the fall of it agayn, at Mr. Harberts abowt sonn-setting. The half-brik weighed 2½1b'.¹⁹¹ Entries such as this, recording the injuries and illnesses of his children are the most numerous, with only a few noting Dee's own condition. On 19 June 1581, he complained of 'a grudging of the ague' and, three days later, he 'did evydently receive the ague, and layd down'.¹⁹²

The Oxford astrologer and antiquarian Elias Ashmole acquired some of Dee's almanacs and developed a similar habit of annotating his life in search of astrological significance. Ashmole leaves an abundance of personal papers in the Bodleian Library, including much evidence of astrological self-analysis: the casting of horoscopes and the posing of horological questions. Among his papers are two cipher diaries, and the fair copy of a so-called diary.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ John Dee, *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee, and the Catalogue of His Library of Manuscripts*, ed. James Orchard Halliwell (London: Camden Society, 1842). The manuscripts of Dee's diaries are in the Bodleian Library: MSS. Ashmole 487 and 488. Ashmole's transcription of their notes is MS. Ashmole 423 art. 122. The volumes in which Dee inscribes these notes are Joannes Stadius, *Ephemerides Novae ab Anno 1554 usque ad Annum 1600* (Cologne: Agrippinæ, 1570) and Joannes Antonius Maginus, *Ephemerides Coelestium Motuum ad Annos XL* (Venice: Zenarium, 1582). Diary entries for the years 1593-4 also appear in MS. Ashmole 204.

¹⁹¹ Dee, *Diary*, p.38.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, p.28.

¹⁹³ The Bodleian Library has three diaristic items belonging to Ashmole, two cipher diaries (MSS. Ashmole 784 and 826, and a document that has been published as his diary: MS. Ashmole 1136. This is not in fact derived from a manuscript that Ashmole conceived of as a daily journal. C.H. Josten explains, 'it is a loose chronological arrangement of autobiographical notes which Ashmole began to

Another important almanac diary was that of Isabella Twysden, who, between 1647 and 1651, kept journals on pages of notes interleaved with almanacs by John Booker, Edward Pond and George Wharton.¹⁹⁴ Twysden's diary is less discursive than Dee's, noting her experiences – including illness – in fragments of sentences. On one page in the first volume, she simply writes, 'the 12. octo. was the first day I had the third day ague',¹⁹⁵ leaving the remainder of the page (as well as its preceding and following pages) blank. The methodology appears to be to augment the pages of the almanacs with additional sheets, entering comparative information adjacent to the relevant part of the almanac's printed text, rather than filling up the pages sequentially. Smyth believes it is possible to glimpse something approaching nascent subjectivity in Twysden's treatments of her health. When Twysden records, 'the .4. July 1649. I came to London from nonsuch, my husband and bro: Jo: came .3. dayes before to serch me up, I went to take the aire being sicke and came back prety well I thank god',¹⁹⁶ Smyth remarks, 'While this is not quite inwardness as our contemporary culture might understand it, these notes do make Twysden her own subject, and they do depend on her ability to turn back on herself, in the first person'.¹⁹⁷

Jeake's diary is more extensive. Although the surviving text (held as a quarto volume at the William Andrew Clark Memorial Library, University of Los Angeles, California)¹⁹⁸ is a fair copy transcription, like Ashmole, Jeake leaves numerous astrological papers in which to contextualise it. Like Twysden, Jeake's business was to make himself his own subject, a task he approached concertedly.

write at the age of sixty one'. *Elias Ashmole 1617-1692: His Autobiographical Notes, His Correspondence, and Other Contemporary Sources Relating to His Life and Work*, ed. C.H. Josten, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), I, p.4.

¹⁹⁴ Twysden's diaries are held in the British Library as MSS. Add. 34169-34172.

¹⁹⁵ BL, MS. Add. 34169, f.9r.

¹⁹⁶ BL, MS. Add. 34170, f.21r.

¹⁹⁷ Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, p.52.

¹⁹⁸ Clark Library, UCLA, MS.1959.006.

Jeake's entries begin in 1652 and run until 1699. Two sheets preserved in Rye Museum contain diary entries giving clues about Jeake's diary-keeping method that are not evident in the Clark Library transcription.¹⁹⁹ The two folio sheets are folded into bifolia, containing diary entries for the period March to October 1699, mostly in shorthand (a method only used occasionally in the fair-copy diary). Also among Jeake's papers is much material concerned with astrological prediction. Various horoscopes cast for the births of friends and family members are preserved,²⁰⁰ along with two drafts of an analysis of his wife's nativity.²⁰¹ In addition to Jeake's weather diary,²⁰² the museum also holds thirty-one sets of account sheets,²⁰³ along with collections of sermon notes,²⁰⁴ literary and religious commonplaces,²⁰⁵ a transcript of a medical text,²⁰⁶ and an original poem by Jeake.²⁰⁷ Various texts contain astrological investigations into his own life.²⁰⁸ A draft of a treatise entitled *Astrological Experiments Exemplified*, which includes a set of diary notes, finds its fair-copy partner in the Clark Library.²⁰⁹

In light of this abundance of self-accounting, it is worth remembering, first, that a good deal of Jeake's self-analysis was conducted through offices he also performed for his family and immediate circle, and cannot be taken absolutely as acts of self-assertion. Second, however, the diary stands out as by far the most consistent and complete of Jeake's texts, one that perhaps – as Dawson recommended Pepys's diary be approached

¹⁹⁹ Rye Museum, Selmes MS. 57. These diary entries are printed as an appendix to Michael Hunter and Annabel Gregory's edition of Jeake's diary: *An Astrological Diary of the Seventeenth Century: Samuel Jeake of Rye, 1652-1699*, ed. Michael Hunter and Annabel Gregory (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

²⁰⁰ Rye Museum, Selmes MS. 55/1-6. A catalogue of Jeake's papers appears in an appendix to Michael Hunter, Giles Mandelbrote, Richard Ovenden and Nigel Smith, eds., *A Radical's Books: The Library Catalogue of Samuel Jeake of Rye, 1623-90* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1999), 333-345.

²⁰¹ Rye Museum, Selmes MSS. 52 and 53/1.

²⁰² Rye Museum, Selmes MS. 33.

²⁰³ Rye Museum, Selmes MSS. 39/1-5, 40/1-6, 41/1-6, 42/1-4, 43/1-5, and 44/1-7.

²⁰⁴ Rye Museum, Selmes MSS. 18/1-4 and 27.

²⁰⁵ Rye Museum, Selmes MSS. 20 and 22.

²⁰⁶ Rye Museum, Selmes MS. 23.

²⁰⁷ Rye Museum, Selmes MS. 51.

²⁰⁸ Rye Museum, Selmes MSS. 35, 36 and 37/1-13.

²⁰⁹ Rye Museum, Selmes MS. 54, and Clark Library, UCLA, MS. 1959.005.

– 'we would do well to bear in mind that it was first among equals'.²¹⁰

Jeake's diary appears sometimes to be minutely self-obsessed. Between September 1670 and May 1671, he records 142 episodes of ague noting the time and the intensity of each fit, as well as his particular symptoms, any medication he took and the planet which had astrological ascendancy at the time. On the day of his second fit, he recorded: 'h About 7h p.m. the 2d fit of the Quartan began: Worse than the first; most violent of all'.²¹¹ And of the seventy second fit, almost four months later, he noted, '♀ About 4h 44' p.m. the 72th fit; sharper; continued till about 10h p.m. My Ague now altered, & become irregular'.²¹² Finally, after recording these varying particulars in every episode of his illness, on 2 May 1671, he entered, '♂ About 2h 30' p.m. the 142d and a last fit; very mild & short'.²¹³

Jeake was perhaps flouting convention by putting astrological principles to use in such narrowly focused self-scrutiny. Ashmole had criticised '*Practitioners*, who (tumbling up and downe their owne *Speculations*) seeke out for *Truth* in the *Little world*, and withdrawing themselves too much from the *Contemplation* of *Experimentall Naturall Obsevationes*, neglect to looke for it in the greate and *common World*'.²¹⁴ But Ashmole's own life records reveal his habits of recording horary questions on narrowly personal matters ('Whether I shall sell my hay wet or not'),²¹⁵ and recording the symptoms of his illnesses in detail: 'About 8H: A.M. I fell sick of the Collick, which held me with sharp paines, specially on my right side, for 24. houres; & then I was presently eased, by applying Bay salt & Bran, heated in a Frying pan; but before

²¹⁰ Dawson, 'Histories and Texts', p.415.

²¹¹ Jeake, *Diary*, p.107.

²¹² *Ibid*, p.112.

²¹³ *Ibid*, p.116.

²¹⁴ *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (London: Grismond, 1652), p.462.

²¹⁵ Josten, *Elias Ashmole 1617-1692*, III, p.618.

nothing else could ease me'.²¹⁶ The substantial difference between Jeake's diary and the life records of Ashmole is that Jeake is more obsessive about recording every development of his illnesses, and more focused in his consideration of the astrological circumstances affecting even his most trivial symptoms. Often, Jeake is fastidious about recording the timings of his illnesses to the minute, a practice Ashmole only indulges in when casting a horoscope, although he admittedly performs that office for some seemingly minor events: '11.10' A:M: The time when I put on my cloth suit with gold buttons double done before/'.²¹⁷

Jeake's diary concertedly presents the minutia of his life as determined by astral movements. By going to such efforts, Jeake seems to make an implicit claim for a rational practice of astrological self-scrutiny along similar lines to the physical observations Hooke made of himself. Jeake, like Hooke, kept meticulous notes of his physic-taking, often to remind himself of the treatments that worked. In April 1686, he noted, having taken '1 scruple Pill Aureae in 2 Pills & next morning about 4h 30'p.m. 1 scruple 5 gr[ains] more'. The medicine helped, as Jeake reported, and it was because of its effectiveness that he noted it in his diary: 'gave 2 stools in the morning & 11 after taking broth; had done working by 1h p.m. & it agreed very well with my body; for which reason I mention the Dose'.²¹⁸

Jeake's methodology distinguishes between medicinal treatments for illness (which he uses according to an empirical criterion of effectiveness) and the astrological forces governing his diseases. And, by the steady accretion of data, his diary seeks to understand both. The fair-copy manuscript was written up by Jeake in 1694, and its daily entries are occasionally punctuated by a passage of commentary or analysis. After

²¹⁶ Ibid, IV, p.1693.

²¹⁷ Ibid, III, p.617.

²¹⁸ Jeake, *Diary*, p.178.

Jeake's long succession of agues in 1670 and 1671, he includes a paragraph of reflection:

This Critical Register of the several Paroxysms, I undertook the rather, to investigate the cause of their Regular Returns. I shall only observe in this place, That, as the morbifique matter encreased, or the constitution or habit of body was vitiated by the continuance of the Quartan; so it became in less than two moneths a Double Quartan, viz. on 16th October last. And encreasing more it became a Triple Quartan on the 19th of November which continued till December 21. When it became irregular and uncertain (or as a Planet having run out his direct course, becomes Stationary to Retrocession) failing of the fits that were expected, 22th, 24th, 25th & 27 December (besides the Chasme of December 16) Then as if it took it's course Retrograde, it was again reduced so for 2 moneths viz. till February 26 when it was further reduced to the narrower Compass of a simple Quartan; but more violent, as if the strength of both fits were now united in one. Thus it continued till March 15 when as if nature were not strong enough to overcome it; it relapsed when Spring coming out on apace, & Nature growing stronger, it was lastly reduced again to a Simple Quartan; which continued till it made a halt on April 26 & finally expired on May 2 after full 8 moneths duration.²¹⁹

Adopting the book-keeping habit of reviewing and rewriting the material, this passage enables Jeake to take an overview of the varying frequency of his fits. The term 'Critical' has medical and astrological significance: Edward Phillips's definition has, 'those dayes wherein a disease comes to its Crisis',²²⁰ adding, 'The Crisis in acute diseases is judged by the Moon, but in Chronick diseases, the Crisis is judged by the Sun'.²²¹ So, when Jeake refers to his eight-month run of diary entries as 'a Critical Register', he is reasserting his claim to have kept the diary in order 'to investigate the cause of their Regular Returns'. Notably, in spite of the great accrual of astrological data that preceded this summary, the conclusions those data lead Jeake to are not astrological. Apart from a simile comparing the changeable frequency of his fits to the phase in a planet's orbit at which it appears to move contrary to its established path, Jeake's summary is free of astrological observations. The simile implies that, even at the

²¹⁹ Ibid, p.116.

²²⁰ Edward Phillips, *The New World of English Words* (London: Tyler, 1658).

²²¹ Ibid.

times at which he is making a conscious effort not to read astrological significance into the details of his life, the planetary movements remained an important frame of reference for his self-examination. But the passage's purpose seems not to be strictly astrological: followed to its conclusion, it may suggest that Jeake regarded health and self as existing in astral relation to one another. On the other hand, it might be that he intended the paragraph as a digest of his fits' timing, from which he could make astrological interpretations but, if this is the case, he does not record those interpretations in his diary. Any ascription of his illness to astral causes is implicit, the account of its progress confined to matters of fact not interpretation.

Jeake's twentieth-century editors suggest that the diarist's unwillingness to read astrological meaning into a great deal of his text 'is symptomatic of an unease with any magical aspect of the art'. 'Some of his judgements', they continue, 'show a matter-of-factness and lack of preparedness to read the magical significance of what could be discerned in a horoscope that some astrologers would find unimaginative. Instead, his enthusiasm was for what could be tested and rationalized'.²²² But this is not to say he makes no astrological interpretations of his life. Indeed, Jeake's title for his diary was, *A Diary of the Actions and Accidents of my Life: tending partly to observe & memorize the Providences therein manifested; & partly to investigate the Measure of Time in Astronomical Directions, and to determine the Astrall Causes, &c.* Rationalising 'accidents' according to astrological principles was a habit of Ashmole's too, his papers including a short list of 'Accidents' and their dates, which his friend William Lilly used to make a commentary on the horoscope of Ashmole's birth.²²³ In 1686, Jeake reported that 'Going out of my Garret my Candle being almost out, I set my foot part off & part

²²² Jeake, *Diary*, 'Introduction', p.14.

²²³ These documents are held at Bodleian Library MSS. Ashmole 1136, f.177r-v and Ashmole 421, ff.1-79.

on upon the Garret floor which by a merciful providence slipped down thence on the uppermost stair, without any staggering or stumbling; whereas if I had stumbled (as it was almost a wonder I did not) my forehead had been dasht against a great beam that lay opposite, & thence I had tumbled down the stairs'.²²⁴ This narrow escape he ascribed to 'the opposition of Mercury out of an airy sign both to the Radical & Transiting Ascendant & the square of Jupiter to them & Mercury'.²²⁵ To this conclusion he added, 'And I do think A certain concurrence of so many Planets happening at the same time to be on the Cusps of malefique houses might all together contribute to the effect, which the solitary positure of any one would not have produced, as the Sun on the 6th Moon on the 4th Mercury on the 7th & Venus on the 8th & the rather because the positure of the houses is much the same with the Radix'.²²⁶

As well as demonstrating the pains that Jeake was sometimes willing to take in reasoning out the astral causes of minute life events, this passage also reveals the lingering presence of divine providence. Clearly, Jeake's belief in providence is not the same as that of Josselin. Although it is invoked in his title, and crops up sporadically, providence is used mostly to describe Jeake's lucky escapes such as this one. It was through 'the good Providence of God',²²⁷ he says that, slipping in his cellar, he was prevented from falling into a well and, when he fell from his horse, 'through God's providence I had no hurt at all'.²²⁸ Jeake, unlike Josselin, does not feel God's hand in every detail of his life, and does not believe that illness is a divine correction for misdeeds. The similarities between the two are rather to be found by comparing Josselin's ascription of providence in the details of his life to Jeake's application of

²²⁴ Jeake, *Diary*, p.175.

²²⁵ Ibid, p.176.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid, p.105.

²²⁸ Ibid, p.156.

astrology in such episodes as the fall on the garret steps. Both assume an anthropocentric universe – Josselin's determined by God; Jeake's by the planets – and both border on self-obsession (though Josselin more consistently than Jeake) in their attempts to record and rationalise the effects of those forces in their lives.

But Jeake's diary goes beyond simply attempting to justify the astral causes of life events. At times, he actually seems to be concerned with his personal development. His practice of listing the books he has read charts his graduation, first into adulthood and then into various areas of learning. One entry from 1671, finds Jeake taking stock of himself in this way, and slipping into a different form of self-examination:

July 4 ♂ Being now 19 Years of Age, I had by this time somewhat acquainted my self with the Latine, Greek, & Hebrew, Rhetorick, Logick, Poetry, Natural Philosophy, Arithmetick, Geometry, Cosmography, Astronomy, Astrology, Geography, Theology, Physick, Dialling, Navigation, Calligraphy, Stenography, Drawing, Heraldry, & History.

My stature was short, viz.; the same that was noted on July 4 1670. My Complexion Melancholy, My Face pale and lean, Forehead high; Eyes grey, Nose large, Teeth bad & distorted, No. 28. Hair of a sad brown, curling: about this age & till after 20 had a great quantity of it; but from thence it decayed & grew thin. My voice grew hoarse after I had the small pocks. My Body was alwayes lean, my hands & feet small, I was partly left handed & partly Ambodexter. In my right hand was found the perfect Triangle composed of the Vital, Cephalick, & Hepatick Lines, all entire; but the Cephalica broken on my left hand. The Moles or Naevi, five: Viz. 1. under the right arm almost as high as the armhole. 2. one in the left hand upon the Mount of Jupiter. 3. one upon the right side, under the short Ribs. 4. one (the largest) on the Abdomen. 5. one, at the left side of the right heel.²²⁹

In studying himself, Jeake adopts a position of unemotional detachment, recording details as matters of fact without interpretive embellishment. His list of the subjects with which he was by that time acquainted seems to stem from a similar impulse to that which led him to include in his diary a list headed 'Before this time I had read over the following Books'.²³⁰ But this academic form of examination quickly gives way to

²²⁹ Ibid, pp.117-118.

²³⁰ Ibid, p.92

physical self-scrutiny. Jeake is perhaps examining himself in a mirror, or at least reflecting on the state of his body. This is the culmination of a process of self-examination in his developing years that saw Jeake record his height each year (in the entry he refers to from July 1670, he registers it at '5 feet 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ Inches').²³¹ The description is remarkably free of embellishment or interpretation. Even Jeake's remark upon his 'Hair of a sad brown' cannot be taken for a philosophical reflection, 'sad' being in common seventeenth-century use to denote a particular shade of brown.²³²

This exercise in self-portraiture suggests that Jeake's identity is bound up in his physicality, and his personal development determined by external influences. Having summarised his intellectual development, he immediately turns to his bodily condition. His bout of smallpox is the only illness recorded, apparently notable not for its severity, but because of the alteration it caused to Jeake's speaking voice. Though well-read in contemporary anatomy²³³ and progressive in his conception of astrology as an experimental science (frequently calling his astrological activities 'Experiments'),²³⁴ Jeake, like the majority of this thesis's subjects, also believed his complexion to be constituted by humoral factors, independent of his subjective will. Frequently, he complains of melancholy, reporting in 1667 that he had been 'seized with an excessive Melancholy, which continued with Violence till July 1670'.²³⁵ In 1680, he entered, 'By Reason of my Melancholy in this Month & the next, being perhaps the most violent I ever were afflicted with: & which made me pass some whole nights without sleep: there

²³¹ Ibid, p.105.

²³² An entry in Richard Huloet's Anglo-Latin dictionary reads: 'Brown colour, somewhat darke, called a sad broun'. Richard Huloet, *Huloets Dictionarie* (London: Marsh, 1572). C.S. Lewis noted the origins of 'sad' in physicality, noting its origins in senses connected with fullness and heaviness. See C.S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 75-85.

²³³ In February and March 1683, Jeake read five anatomical texts including Harvey's *Anatomical Exercitations of the Motion of the Heart & Blood*. Jeake, *Diary*, p.162. In April the same year, he entered Harvey's *Anatomical Exercitations Concerning the Generation of Living Creatures* onto his booklist. Ibid, p.163.

²³⁴ See *ibid*, p.230.

²³⁵ Ibid, p.98.

arose great displeasure & difference between me & my intended Mother in Law & Wife'.²³⁶ His physicality affected his family relationships, but the fact that Jeake goes to such detail as enumerating and describing his moles suggests that he took his bodily fascination to a similar level of scrutiny as Josselin did the details of his daily life. Like Josselin, he is apparently obsessive in recording microcosmic detail. His moles represent five tiny marks on his skin, treated with the same observational detachment as the lines of chiromancy on his palm. His apparent assumption of the overlap between illness, complexion, physical appearance and identity implies that his diary's catalogue of physical symptoms constitutes a kind of self-creation: but, for Jeake, his physicality, even on its most minute scale, expresses an astrologically ordained (rather than a self-created) character.

²³⁶ Ibid, p.153.

2.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The term 'autobiography' in this chapter's title refers to a variety of texts that describe life events (social or spiritual) without aggregating data in a series of regular entries. Some tell the story of a life from nonage to dotage; others collect tales of experiences episodically; some confine themselves to describing in detail a particular period: in all cases I will be dealing with texts that are, in a sense, occasional rather than diaries, which tend to be habitual. The distinction is not hard and fast but, even if the boundary lines are blurry, the subject of this thesis is the experience of illness, and it is worth reflecting on the differences between illness as it is annotated in a continuous diary as opposed to the ways in which it is described after the fact. And it is necessary to consider what might be the place of these occasional autobiographies and their descriptions of illness in the textual economy I described in Chapter 1.

The term autobiography appears to have had late-eighteenth-century coinage and the form truly to have gained popularity during the Victorian age.¹ Even so, Roger North laid the foundations for the practice of writing a non-religious life history much earlier. In an unpublished 'General Preface', designed to introduce his lives of his brothers, North defends biographical writing as 'more beneficial, generally, than the most solemn Registers of Ages and Nations, or the Acts and

¹ OED gives a review of I. D'Israeli's *Miscellanies* in 1797 as the first citation although, this cannot truly be said to mark the beginning of the modern term's circulation in English, being an acknowledgement that, not only is autobiography a neologism, but one whose use (in place of Disraeli's '*Self-biography*') 'would seem pedantic'. '*Miscellanies* or Literary Reflections', *Monthly Review*, 24 (1797), 374-379, p.375.

Monuments of famed Governours, Statesmen, Prelates, or Generals of times. The gross Reason is because the latter contain little, of any thing to instruct a private Economy, or tending to make a Man ever the wiser or more cauteous in his own proper Concerns'.² In this spirit, the essay defends the educational value of life stories, offering advice to 'Whoever hath a Mind either his Family or the Public should profit by his Example, and would be known to Posterity truly as he was'.³ He does not recommend that personal memoirs be prepared and delivered unmediated into print, but counsels that a journal should be kept 'of all the Incidents that may afford useful Remarks upon the Course of his Life'.⁴ This is not an incitement to regular, aggregative diary-keeping, but an encouragement to take a retrospective survey of a whole life. The exercise would produce the additional benefit (in common with Puritan diary-keeping in which North showed no interest) of forcing the writer to 'retrospect his Actions, and, seeing his Errors and Failings, endeavour to mend them. It would also be a check upon all his Exorbitances upon considering that, being sett down, they would stain his Reputation'.⁵ That life-story would form the basis of posthumous biographies.

North produced just such a proto-text about himself, which I will come to later in this chapter, and Hooke, as we saw in Chapter 1, appeared to have been planning a memoir worked up from his diaries. It is important to remember that North's 'General Preface' advocated an approach to life-writing designed to bequeath to posterity the most accurate life records possible, and to preclude the injustices history is apt to visit on its subjects. But North's was an eighteenth-century text;⁶ far

² BL, MS. Add. 32526, 'General Preface', ff.1-32, f.1r.

³ Ibid, f.31r.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Peter Millard notes that the 'General Preface' was 'in existence between 1713 and 1718 that it and probably received its final touches about the mid-seventeen-twenties'. Peter Millard, 'The

more common during the seventeenth century were the various forms of spiritual autobiography with which criticism has greater familiarity.

Recent scholarship has turned against the tendency to force spiritual autobiography into the framework of the conversion narrative. Rather than following a convention dating back to Augustine (but which mysteriously disappeared between the fifth and fifteenth centuries), Meredith Skura argues that early modern and 'older writing about oneself appeared only in scattered passages and was incidental to other purposes; or it was allegorical; or it presented the author's life as moral exemplar rather than individual experience'.⁷ The Augustinian model, Skura argues, gained traction through a tendency to privilege autobiographical texts by men of a certain social standing. Attention to texts 'by women and members of other marginalized groups', she holds, has enabled scholars 'to explore various examples of a more loosely defined "life writing," that is, any kind of writing in which the narrator is writing about her- or himself'.⁸ The sustained conversion narrative no longer stands as a prescriptive template for early modern autobiography, but that is not to deny that many of the texts I will treat in this chapter present moments of religious self-justification: assertions of God having saved a writer from the brink of death or provided for his or her family at times of hardship will abound. In Sharon Cadman Seelig's helpful phrase, 'spiritual autobiography may be a touchstone rather than a model' for these writers.⁹

Chronology of Roger North's Main Works', *Review of English Studies*, 24:95 (1973), 283-294, p.290. North may have reflected on autobiography earlier: as Millard notes, he 'must have been working on' his memoir, *Notes of Me*, 'at varying times, beginning c. 1695 and finishing some time after 1707'. Ibid, p.291.

⁷ Meredith Skura, 'A Mirror for Magistrates and the Beginnings of English Autobiography', *English Literary Renaissance*, 36:1 (2006), 26-56, p.26.

⁸ Ibid, p.27. Margaret Spufford, 'First Steps in Literacy: The Reading and Writing Experiences of the Humblest Seventeenth-Century Spiritual Autobiographers', *Social History*, 4:3 (1979), 407-435, has attempted to broaden scholarly horizons by examining life-writing among members of typically under-represented social classes.

⁹ Sharon Cadman Seelig, *Autobiography and Gender in Early Modern Literature: Reading Women's*

A second feature that many (though not all) of these disparate works have in common is a tendency to record moments of providential intervention as exemplars either for future personal behaviour or to succeeding generations. An example of that at its most concerted (and self-abasing) is the typological habit of accounting for the author's life as an expression of certain Biblical precedents.¹⁰ Such behaviour, as well as the by-now-familiar relics of financial accounting habits, along with an increased attentiveness to the textual apparatus of print will recur in this chapter. I will develop a narrative of seventeenth-century autobiographical descriptions of illness that begins with texts making a pious abasement of selfhood and ends with those assembling non-spiritual life records for posterity. Fluctuating levels of devotional practice will entwine with various social and domestic concerns along the way. I will begin with two assertions of self-abasement from distinctly different texts – the Quaker writer Alice Hayes's memoir, written as a legacy for her children, and Donne's *Devotions*, composed during acute illness in 1623. As well as being a feature of autobiographical texts from the height of Protestant orthodoxy (which Donne, by that time, represented) and of those from one of its more radical sects, the Quakers, this profound suspicion of selfhood was carried into the meditation books of Mary Rich. I will reflect upon Rich's descriptions of illness in their connections to, and departures from, those of her diaries. Similarly, I will consider the relationship of Anne Halkett's now-famous autobiography, held in the British Library, to her lesser-referred-to books of meditations in the National Library of Scotland. Next, I will turn to Alice Thornton, drawing observations about her varying descriptions of illness in different manuscript modes. Then, I will investigate the papers of Richard Baxter that form the

Lives 1600-1680 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.8.

¹⁰ This is discussed in E. Pearlman, 'Typological Autobiography in Seventeenth-Century England', *Biography*, 8:2 (1985), 95-118, and in Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, pp.123-158.

basis of his *Reliquiae Baxterianæ*, a seeming torrent of medical complaints. Finally, I will turn to Roger North, examining the several areas of commonality between his secular memoir and these spiritual ones.

THAT MONSTER SELF: ALICE HAYES AND JOHN DONNE

In her autobiography, *A Widow's Mite*, bequeathed as a spiritual legacy to her children,¹¹ the Quaker preacher Alice Hayes inveighed against the sinful, potentially blasphemous, distractions of her imaginary life and the sense of personal agency it promoted:

And this I must say, and that in the Bowedness of my Spirit, that I have no Might of my own, nor Power, nor Ability, but what he shall be pleased to give me: And let nothing be attributed to that Monster *Self*, which too often appears both in Preachers and Writers, which proves like the *Fly in the Ointment of the Apothecary*.¹²

Raised in the Anglican church, Hayes joined the Society of Friends in her young adulthood. Her deep suspicion of her own subjectivity is typical of early-Quakerism, which held that believers, rather than seeking spiritual truth intellectually, ought to feel themselves mentally and physically consumed by God. In 1670, another Quaker, Isaac Pennington, wrote to the missionary Thomas Walmsley, 'It is not enough to hear of Christ, or read of Christ; but this is the thing, – to feel him my root, my life, my foundation; and my soul ingrafted into him, by him who hath power to ingraft'.¹³ As the forms of Protestantism known as “heart religion” took root in seventeenth-century Britain, the spiritual value of feeling and absorbing religious truth (activities

¹¹ Although Hayes's text was clearly designed as a work of spiritual advice for her children, it was popular enough among Quakers to go through four editions in the eighteenth century. The first appeared in 1723, two years after Hayes's death, the second in 1749, the third in 1765, and the fourth in 1786.

¹² Alice Hayes, *A Legacy, or Widow's Mite* (London: Sowle, 1723), p.65.

¹³ Isaac Pennington, *The Works of the Long Mournful and Sorely Distressed Isaac Pennington*, 4 vols. (London: Clark, 1761), I, p.433.

associated with the heart) grew, while self-conscious practices like thought and reason (associated with the brain) came to be treated with scepticism.¹⁴ In Hayes's case, brain-oriented activities had the capacity to pollute the truths absorbed by her heart. In her Biblical (rather than original) formulation, selfhood can only impede her ability to feel Christ's operations in her, contaminating her soul – 'like the *Fly in the Ointment of the Apothecary*'¹⁵ – and damaging her chances of salvation.

Hayes's understanding of illness is similar to Josselin's: her body is subject to providential illnesses, designed to manipulate her spiritual state and make her fit for redemption. Her part in the process is mere submission. *A Widow's Mite* names two significant episodes of sickness,¹⁶ at one stage generalising about their effect on Hayes's spiritual life: 'And when very weak in Body, I have been led by the SPIRIT into the low Valley of deep Humility, wherein I have been overcome with Admiration, beholding *Him that was greater than Solomon*'.¹⁷ This necessary humbling prepares her for what is to follow: 'And surely as there is a coming into a near Communion with CHRIST the LORD, there will be very great Abasement in the Creature, where all Flesh will be brought to Silence in His Presence, that His Voice may be heard, and His Goings seen in the Temple, and with what Majesty he appears there'.¹⁸ Her body is disposable but, while it lives, Hayes believes that God acts upon it in an attempt to effect corrections such that she should come to judgement in a proper condition of humility. 'Oh! excellent it is, and very Glorious to behold; and that my Soul may

¹⁴ See Campbell, *The Religion of the Heart* and Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, pp.266-267.

¹⁵ The phrase originates in Ecclesiastes 10:1: 'Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour'.

¹⁶ A 'Wrench in my Anckle' which left Hayes 'a poor Object, and a Cripple' (Hayes, pp.20-23), and a 'a great Fit of Sickness' (pp.24-34) following her recovery from that injury are the only two illnesses that are explicitly named, although ill-health coinciding with periods of spiritual lapse is implied and discussed in general terms throughout.

¹⁷ Hayes, p.66.

¹⁸ Ibid.

dwell before Him, is what with great Humility and Tears I beg at his bountiful Hand', she exclaims.¹⁹ This devout supplication is what is represented by the '*Ointment of the Apothecary*' that Hayes argues is contaminated by her invasive selfhood.

The habit was not confined to the ascetic wings of Protestantism: Donne was similarly suspicious of his mental operations. His *Devotions*, printed in 1624, immediately after his convalescence from a severe case of relapsing fever, proclaims:

I see thine hand upon mee now, O Lord, and I aske not why it comes, what it intends: whether thou wilt bidde it stay still in this *Body*, for some time, or bidd it meet thee this day in *Paradise*, I aske not, not in a *wish*, not in a *thought*: *Infirmities of Nature, Curiosities of Minde*, are tentations that offer; but a silent, and absolute obedience, to thy will, euen before I know it, is my *Cordiall*.²⁰

Although *Devotions* presents a great mass of personal information, as a medical history, it gives relatively little detail about Donne's symptoms, making few medical interpretations. Rather, Donne treats his illness as a religious experience, reporting the interrelations of his body and spirit as the disease progresses. The distinction is important: Donne was willing to follow a train of thought prompted by his developing illness, but he declined to investigate the medical significance of particular developments ('I aske not why it comes, what it intends'). Hayes thought selfhood a 'Monster', and Donne assents in as much as non-spiritual self-reflexion is not his concern: the instinct to examine and interpret his body medically stems from '*Infirmities of Nature, Curiosities of Minde*, which, in turn, are tentations that offer'. Like Hayes, he recommends 'silent, and absolute obedience, to thy will' as his *Cordiall* – another indication that Donne's is a religion of heart not head. But, in spite of these protestations, *Devotions* is an exemplary text of mental curiosity and self-reflexivity which persistently asks, why the phases of Donne's illness come and what

¹⁹ Ibid, pp.66-67.

²⁰ Donne, *Devotions* (1624), pp.282-283.

they intend. In a passage redolent of the Holy Sonnet 'I am a little world', he demands, 'Is this the honour which Man hath by being a *litle world*, That he hath these *earthquakes* in him selfe, sodaine shakings; these *lightnings*, sodaine flashes; these *thunders*, sodaine noises; these *Eclipses*, sodain offuscations, & darknings of his senses; these *blazing stars* sodaine fiery exhalations; these *riuers of blood*, sodaine red waters?'²¹

Of course, Donne is aware of his introspective absorption, and berates himself for it. Meditating on sleep, he wonders, 'if I be entring now into *Eternitie*, where there shall bee no more distinction of *houres*, why is it al my businesse now *to tell Clocks*?'²² The problem is symptomatic, he suspects, of a religious malaise: 'But why rather being entring into that presence, where I shall wake continually and neuer sleepe more, doe I not interpret my continuall waking here, to bee a *parasceue*, and a *preparation* to that?'²³ Like Hayes, Donne uses the language of contagion to express this problem. His starting premise (quoted from Genesis 6:5) is '*That every imagination of the thoughts of our hearts, is onely evill continually*'.²⁴ Just being alive leaves him vulnerable: 'But yet as long as I remaine in this great *Hospitall*, this sicke, this diseasefull world, as long as I remaine in this leprous house, this flesh of mine, this Heart, though thus prepared *for* thee, prepared *by* thee, will still be subject to the invasion of maligne and pestilent vapours'.²⁵ But Donne has a '*Cordiall*' (literally a medicine pertaining to the heart)²⁶ against those vapours: the knowledge that 'thou wilt preserve that heart, from all mortall force, of that infection'.²⁷

²¹ Ibid, pp.6-5.

²² Ibid, pp.361-372.

²³ Ibid, pp.372-373.

²⁴ Ibid, p.267.

²⁵ Ibid, pp.275-276.

²⁶ Phillips (1658) offers the definition, 'comfortable to the heart'.

²⁷ Donne, *Devotions* (1624), p.276.

At this point, a slight but meaningful difference between Hayes and Donne appears. Whereas Hayes is sceptical of the self in any form, preaching unquestioning submission to God's will, Donne holds that knowledge of God is the authentic form of self-knowledge. God declares 'unto man, what is his Heart' and, without God, Donne 'could not know, how ill my *heart* were'.²⁸ In Bible reading, he finds 'so good testimony of the *hearts* of men, as to finde *single hearts*, *docile*, and *apprehensiu*e *hearts*; Hearts that *can*, Hearts that *haue* learnt; *wise hearts*, in one place, and in another, in a great degree, *wise*, *perfit* hearts; *straight hearts*'.²⁹ His frustration is a failure to measure up to these Biblical types: 'if my *heart* were such a *heart*, I would giue thee my *Heart*'.³⁰ The distinction between Donne's willingness to measure his heart against the scriptures and Hayes's outright denunciation of selfhood is important. Donne's approach permits self-scrutiny as a meditative practice, Hayes's only as a didactic exercise. Whereas Hayes seeks to teach her children through examples of her own dereliction in her religious duties, Donne both learns about himself by reference to scriptural types and performs an act of self-examination which is, by extension, an act of self-assertion and an examination of God's work. His illness gives him an instance of that to consider through the lens of scriptural authority, and his challenge is not to allow his own '*imagination*' or the '*thoughts of our hearts*' to intrude upon the process.³¹

Experience leads Donne to a conclusion similar to that of Hayes. His scriptural reading may provide him with examples of hearts untainted by earthly

²⁸ Ibid, p.268.

²⁹ Ibid, p.269.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Donne raises the problem of maintaining devout concentration elsewhere. In William Cokayne's funeral sermon, he admonished himself for failing to give his prayers due attention: 'I throw my selfe downe in my Chamber, and I call in, and invite God, and his Angels thither, and when they are there, I neglect God and his Angels, for the noise of a Flie, for the ratling of a Coach, for the whining of a doore'. John Donne, *LXXX Sermons* (London: Royston, 1640), p.820.

vices but, in daily intercourse, he encounters, '*Hearts*, that are snares; and I have conuersed with such; *Hearts that burne like Ouens*; and the fuell of *Lust*, and *Enuie*, and *Ambition*, hath inflamed mine'.³² These examples are the more seductive and Donne admits to having succumbed to their temptations ('But I find *stonie* hearts too, and I haue made mine such').³³ Absorption of religious truth into the heart is essential, but the process has its dangers: care has to be taken not to lay oneself open to 'maligne and pestilent vapours', to use Donne's expression – flies in the ointment to use Hayes's. Vigilance is required if Donne is to meditate profitably on his illness without sliding into self-obsession. To that end, he raises a point of doctrine to help confine his focus to heavenly matters: '*hee that trusteth in his owne heart, is a foole*'; His confidence in his owne morall Constancie, and civill fortitude, will betray him, when thou shalt cast a spirituall dampe, a heavniesse, and dejection of spirit upon him.'³⁴

The closest Hayes came to self-reflection was allowing for moments of realisation when she strayed. Sometimes, when life was good, she lapsed, confessing, '*I forgot the tender Dealings and Mercies of so Gracious a God, that had delivered me out of many Exercises and Afflictions, and gave myself what Liberty my unstable Mind desired, forgetting again my Promises and Covenants I had made to the Lord*'.³⁵

The punishment was sharp:

And thus I went on for about one year and a half after Marriage, when the Lord, with an Eye of Pity, looked upon my wretched State, and miserable Condition, and laid his Hand upon me, in order to awaken me out of this State of false Ease, and by a great Fit of Sickness brought me near to Death, where I beheld my Backslidings and Disobedience with Amazement. My Conscience being thoroughly awakened, Horroure and condemnation took fast hold upon me, and the Witness arose there, which

³² Donne, *Devotions* (1624), p.270.

³³ Ibid, pp.269-270.

³⁴ Ibid, pp.270-271.

³⁵ Hayes, *A Legacy, or Widow's Mite* pp.23-24.

caused sore and dismal Distress of Mind; and in this distressed Condition, *I seemed just going to step out of Time into Eternity*. In this State, I saw, if I died in this state, *My Portion must be with the Unbelievers and Disobedient, in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone for evermore*.³⁶

Hayes was a passive recipient of guidance: 'the Lord, with an eye of pity, looked upon' her 'wretched and miserable condition, and laid his hand upon' her. With her conscience 'thoroughly awakened', she was temporarily permitted to scrutinize herself, as Boyle did when his ague jolted him from devotional complacency.³⁷ Hayes's recognition of her 'Backslidings and Disobedience' set off a chain reaction which saw her first stunned and then falling into distress, such that she thought herself in mortal danger. The experience gave a practical demonstration of the physical and spiritual dangers of self-scrutiny. Her initial crime was allowing herself 'Liberty' to indulge her 'unstable Mind' and, as a result, Hayes was thrown into a protracted period of mental discomfort, until she 'venture'd once again to enter into Covenant with the Lord'.³⁸

MARY RICH

Self-scrutiny, in the cases of Hayes and Donne, does not so much indicate an exploration of the vivid interiority of the individual mind as an effort to suppress it. But, as we have seen, Protestants were encouraged to meditate – as Donne did – on their life experiences, and to distill meaning from those meditations. Prominent among the meditative texts that this chapter will explore are those of Mary Rich.

In addition to the five volumes of Rich's diaries preserved in the British Library, the collection contains a further two volumes of autobiography, which

³⁶ Ibid, p.24.

³⁷ See Boyle, *Occasional Reflections*, II, p.188.

³⁸ Hayes, p.25.

organise some of the material collected in her diaries into categories. The first is entitled 'Some Specialities in the life of M Warwicke' and contains descriptions of formative and transformative experiences.³⁹ The other bears the title 'Occasionale Meditationes' and offers reflections on moments of religious poignancy.⁴⁰ Both volumes are the same size as the diaries, though written in a clearer hand. They appear to share a textual heritage with the diaries, though they were probably produced as the second stage of a two-part process, editing and expanding on the raw materials the diaries compiled.

A note in the 'Specialities' in the hand of Thomas Woodroffe, the Richs' family chaplain (whose annotations and corrections appear all over Mary Rich's diaries and meditations), records, 'Feb.8, 9, 10. 1671. most of yese three days were spent in recording ye specialities of her Life, see Diary. ffebr. 11-31'. Additionally, Woodroffe copies a quotation from another part of the diaries: 'Dec. 21. Red some before noted specialities of my fore past life'.⁴¹ These clues and the volume's title, 'Specialities', imply that Rich regarded the text as a selection of edited highlights from her life history, which, rather than offering a quasi-romantic narrative influenced by her confessed reading of such texts in her youth, as is sometimes claimed,⁴² she envisaged being used in much the same way as her diary: compiled

³⁹ BL, MS. Add. 27357. This text was printed in 1848 under the title *The Autobiography of Mary Countess of Warwick*, ed. T. Crofton Croker (London: Percy Society, 1848). Rich appears to use the term 'Specialities' in its sense of 'particulars, details' (OED).

⁴⁰ BL, MS. Add. 27356.

⁴¹ BL, MS. Add. 26357, f.40r. At least the first of these claims is supported by the diaries: see BL, MS. Add. 26352, f.283r.

⁴² Ramona Wray, 'Recovering the Reading of Renaissance Englishwomen: Deployments of Autobiography', *Critical Survey*, 12:2 (2000), 33-48 argues for just such a romantic influence in the 'Specialities'. Wray claims that, in spite of her repeatedly professed rejection of romantic literature in the diary, Rich is ultimately unable to do away with romance as a mode of self-expression, 'because the language she encounters can be adapted to match her own understanding' (p.42). This may be so, but my arguments, here, suggest that such an account does not give enough weight to Rich's Puritan disavowals of playgoing and frivolous reading, nor to the formal relationship between the diary and the 'Specialities'.

and read over as part of her devotional routine.

The 'Meditations', meanwhile, is a set of reflections on Rich's experiences from which she distills spiritual lessons. Like the diary, the text was transcribed into a series of notebooks, now bound together, and each beginning with a title page in Rich's hand giving the date of its contents. The full text covers a period between 1663 and 1675. Their layout is more formal than that of the diaries and, in the early notebooks, Rich leaves the verso pages blank, though she soon develops the habit of writing on those. Some of the text is ornately lineated, mimicking the print convention of tapering the line-length at the end of each entry to conclude with a single word at the centre of a line. This detail implies that the 'Meditations' appears to straddle the divide between the aggregation of personal data for devotional use and a presentation attentive to the aesthetic of its text and its ease of reading. It has much in common with the diary, being continually in progress and periodically updated over time, but it is also a different type of text, choosing to dwell on and interrogate particular experiences rather than simply recording them.

The picture that emerges is of a process of systematic life recording, begun in the 1660s, that, in 1671, develops in sophistication: at that stage, as well as continuing to inscribe the details of her daily devotional life into her diary, Rich began to sift the data she had collected (in both the diaries and her memory) and to organise it taxonomically into categories: key experiences were recorded in the 'Specialities' and moments of religious poignancy in the 'Meditations'.

The 'Specialities' collect narrative accounts of instances of God's providence to Rich. A severe bout of smallpox in her mid twenties receives lengthy treatment. The illness was sudden and, although Rich was not expected to recover, she reports,

'it pleased God by his meanes to saue my life'.⁴³ The execution of Charles I in 1649 was the occasion of the condition's onset, Rich recording, 'I had a great abhorance of that Bloody acte, and was much disordered at it'.⁴⁴ Being 'uised with a very long and dangerous siknes', Rich found herself severely debilitated, 'in which by reason of great fumes I had, my head was highly disordered to a deegree that som times I knew no body, and wold talke Idely and extravagently'.⁴⁵ Eventually, she rallied:

I lay a while in that very weake and ill condition, but in that siknes had much satesfaction to see the great tender and oblidgeing care my <husband and> father in Law had of me, and my mother in Law too was much conserved for me, it pleased my Good and mersyfull God after a long time to Cure me perfectly by his blessing upon Docter wrihtes meanes, who told me that in all his great and long Practise he had neauer knowne but one that was as I had bene, my illnes was as he told me ocasioned by fumes of the spleene which had such strange efectes upon me as to make my head shake as If I had, had the pallsy, and made me too many times speake so that I could not hardly be understode by any body, In this distemper I wold Laugh too and Cry for nothing, and though I did recouer yet for along time after my head by fittes wold be much disturbed, but at last by Godes mersy I attained to perfect health againe,⁴⁶

That the severest phase of the illness was brought on by Rich's hearing news of the King's death is surely significant. In Chapter 1, I observed that Rich's diary, at times, registered her own condition and the state of the nation as equivalents. Here again, national events brought personal consequences. This is not a case of coincidence misread as cause: Rich was confident that she knew the aetiology of her illness, ascribing it to 'fumes of the spleene'. She also believed that those fumes derived from a passionate response to an act of national desecration: the 'great abhorance' brought on by the news 'disordered' her body. In this way, Rich's physical condition was not only the subject of God's corrections but also vulnerable to fluctuations in her

⁴³ BL, MS. Add. 26357, f.26r.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid, f.26v.

⁴⁶ Ibid, ff.27r-v. The phrase in angle brackets has been written in by Rich as a superscription, replacing the deleted word, 'God'.

political and social climate.

This is an important context in which to read the 'Specialities'. The text begins with a long account of Rich defying her father by rejecting a marriage proposal, giving encouragement to readings that take it as a work in which 'the subject is empowered by herself precipitating a romantic course of action'.⁴⁷ Such interpretations perhaps take too little note of the analysis Rich makes of her place within the family. In the example above, faced with socially indecorous symptoms – shaking as if with palsy; laughing and crying 'for nothing' – she dutifully notes 'the great tender and obligeing care my husband and father in Law had of me', and that 'my mother in Law too was much conserved for me'. A similar technique is evident in her description of the rejected proposal, Rich insisting, although 'my father preste me extreamely to it, my auersion for [her suitor] was exstrodinary, though I could giue my father noe satesfactory acounmpte why it was so'.⁴⁸ This sounds like wilful defiance but, Rich justifies her actions as being answerable to an authority other than her father's. It was, she reports, 'a good prouidence of God' that she turned down the proposal: about a year later, her suitor was 'inpouirished so that he lost for a great while his whole estate, the Rebellse being in the posesion of it, which I should haue likte very ill, for if I had maried him it must haue bene for his estates sake, not his one, his persone being highly disagreeable to me'.⁴⁹ Rich's decision, though it seems an expression of personal preference, is remitted to God and its justification made partly in financial terms: the account given in 'Specialities' is a record of a sound decision taken.

In both the bout of smallpox and the rejected proposal, Rich presents herself

⁴⁷ Wray 'Recovering the Reading of Renaissance Englishwomen', p.40.

⁴⁸ BL, MS. Add. 26357, f.3v.

⁴⁹ Ibid, f.4r.

as subject to a chain of command whose reach is national and divine. In analysing her illness, she is careful to say that the cure is effected by God conferring 'his blessing upon Docter wrightes meanes', and by the doctor attending solely to physical details: the fumes that caused Rich's more disturbing symptoms.⁵⁰ The relationship, between Rich's doctor and her disease suggests the extent to which the 'Specialities' is a text of reckoning up the various forces acting upon her. Rich's personal and social life was much inhibited by the illness – it made her incoherent, prone to fits of laughter and tears – but it was through her doctor's attention to, and adjustment of, these physical details, not the force of her personality, that she 'atained to perfect health againe'.⁵¹

The book of 'Meditations', meanwhile, evokes similar humility to that we have already seen in Hayes and Donne. The 1649 episode of smallpox was also described in the Meditations. That version has it that Rich's self-belief was, if anything, invigorated by the disorder. Asked by her doctors how she felt, Rich 'answered well, and so indeed I did beleeeve my selfe to be, which made my kind and most concerned friendes trobled to see my great insensibleness under so palpable and aparant hasarde of my life'.⁵² Then, receiving treatment, she records, 'being asked by him how I felte my selfe, I answered Ill and began to make moueing Complaintes of my distempered and pained body which made him then Conclude I began to mend'.⁵³ From the experience she took encouragement to continue her pious self-scrutiny, but not to self-justification:

Turne this O my Soule in to a usefull meditation, and Consider how much danger then Is in insensibilty under Soul distemperes, for whilst thou beleuest thy Selfe well and thereupon cryest peace, peace, under a

⁵⁰ Ibid, f.27r.

⁵¹ Ibid, f.27v,

⁵² BL, MS. Add. 26356, f.132r.

⁵³ Ibid.

mistaken opinion that thou hast made thy peace with God, some diserneing spirituall physitian may say unto thee what hast thou to doe with peace whilst so many unmortified Corruptiounes euinse to others (though not to the selfe) that thou arte yet in danger of Eternall death,⁵⁴

Rather than assert her piety, Rich resolved to turn herself over to the observation of a 'diserneing spirituall physitian'. In her self-scrutiny, meanwhile, her prayer was that 'I may not beleue my selfe well when under dangerous symptomes of spirituall distemperes'.⁵⁵ Even once she had seen these 'spirituall distemperes', Rich did not regard such enlightenment as the proper end of her religious behaviour. Rather, her plea was that she be enabled to subjugate herself to God's care rather than succumbing to the temptations of self-justification: 'lett the purefying sense I haue of my danger make me run to thee for the trew uneursole reamedy' [universal remedy].⁵⁶

ANNE HALKETT

Those temptations were much stronger in the case of Anne Halkett, she having been the subject of scandal after becoming romantically entangled with the royalist agent Joseph Bampfield, whose monarchist convictions were called into question and who turned out to be still-married to a wife he claimed to believe dead. This is one of the central matters of Halkett's memoir in the British Library, a text that has been the focus of most scholarship on her, although long-due attention has recently been paid to the fourteen volumes of meditations held by the National Library of Scotland.⁵⁷ Like Rich, Halkett's memoir has been characterised as an example of romantic writing, casting its author as the central figure in a tale of misfortune, injustice and

⁵⁴ Ibid, f.132v.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid, ff.132v-133r.

⁵⁷ A list of books made in the biography of Halkett by S.C. (probably her minister Simon Cooper), indicates that there were twenty one volumes of Meditations, though the remaining seven are lost. See S.C., *The Life of the Lady Halket* (Edinburgh: Symson and Knox, 1701), sig.H4v.

misadventure. Work by Margaret Ezell, Susan Wiseman and Suzanne Trill, however, has challenged the widespread assumption of Halkett as a romantic writer, giving due attention to the manuscripts in Edinburgh.⁵⁸ These books of meditations provided Halkett with scriptural (and other theological) templates for reflecting on illness and, as in the case of Rich, attention to the relationships between Halkett's numerous texts can illuminate her approach to describing illness.

At first glance, some of Halkett's later books of meditation appear to be diaries. They begin as receptacles for advice to her children and 'occasional meditations', but develop into volumes containing dated entries, written regularly over a period of decades.⁵⁹ But, they also depart from the methodology of aggregating life information. As Ezell describes them, 'Her texts are not casual jottings or notes but a series of short compositions or meditations on various topics'.⁶⁰ We have seen examples of diaries as aggregated notes designed to be read through and written up in fair copies. Halkett did not treat her meditations like that, though they do bear signs of being designed for rereading. Her volumes contain similar self-scrutinising exercises to those performed in Rich's notebooks (which, minor corrections aside, do not seem to have been edited by their author). But Halkett's texts adhere to a number of the conventions of print: several volumes contain indexes

⁵⁸ See Margaret Ezell, 'Anne Halkett's Morning Devotions: Posthumous Publication and the Culture of Writing in Late Seventeenth-Century Britain', in Arthur Marotti and Michael Bristol, eds., *Print, Manuscript, & Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2000), 215-234, Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue: Women, Writing, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.319-333, and Susan Trill, 'Beyond Romance? Re-Reading the 'Lives' of Anne, Lady Halkett (1621/2?-1699)', *Literature Compass*, 6:2 (2009), 446-459. Additionally, Mary Ellen Lamb has argued that Halkett's supposedly sacred and secular writings need not be sharply distinguished and that, indeed, a more nuanced understanding of her writing can be developed by reflecting upon the interrelation of sacred and secular in her texts. See Mary Ellen Lamb, 'Merging the Secular and the Spiritual in Lady Anne Halkett's Memoirs', in Michelle M. Dowd and Julie A. Eckerle, eds., *Genre and Women's Life Writing in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), 81-96.

⁵⁹ Halkett's earliest surviving volume (NLS, MS. 6489) dates from the early 1650s and she continued to write daily meditations until her death in 1699.

⁶⁰ Ezell, 'Anne Halkett's Morning Devotions', p.219.

or contents lists; margins are ruled into the top and bottom, right- and left-hand edges of the pages and, into those, Halkett writes her own page numbers as well as noting the various scriptural verses on which her meditations draw. Rather than simply using her notebooks as vessels into which her meditations were decanted, Halkett appears to have taken pains to organise and annotate her materials.⁶¹

An early volume of meditations contains a reflection on Mark 16:17-18. If Halkett's descriptions here are autobiographical, they are so on different terms from those a casual glossing of the word might assume. Halkett frames her discussion by quoting her scriptural text at the beginning of the meditation and, in the passage that follows, she gives nothing in the way of specific details from her life. The text, as she gives it, is: 'And these signes shall follow them that beleue in my name they shall cast outt Diuells they shall speak with new tounge they shall take up serpents and if they drinke any deadly thing itt shall nott hurt them they shall lay hands on the sicke and they shall receouer'.⁶² Each of these five prescriptions that Jesus made for his disciples in his post-resurrection appearances is given fuller explication, with Halkett reading the events of her life as reflections of her conformity to, in particular, the third and fourth of them. In analysing the applications to her own life of the third – that 'they should take up serpents withoutt hurt and drinking that wch was deadly to others should nott hurt them'⁶³ – she comes closest to making a direct reference to

⁶¹ Ezell's claim that Halkett's 'manuscripts show numerous indications that she was consciously shaping her own manuscript writings for a print readership rather than a manuscript one' (Ezell, 'Anne Halkett's Morning Devotions', p.217), is perhaps overstated (she may have been designing the texts to have uniformity with those of her library of printed books, and her envisaged audience might, on that account, have been herself and her children who would inherit the library). Ezell is, however, correct to observe that that, 'while Halkett declares at various time throughout the years that she is not writing *directly* for publication, she nevertheless clearly had anticipated the possibility of an unknown reader perusing her books'. Ibid, p.222. She demonstrates the claim by quoting Halkett's assertion that she was 'never intending while I live to lett any see the morning refreshments' and her acknowledgement that it may be that 'the Lord think fitt to manifest [my texts] when I am Dead'. NLS, MS. 6495, p.iii.

⁶² NLS, MS. 6490, p.221.

⁶³ Ibid, p.225.

one of its events. Describing herself as having been 'a stranger amongst my owne friends' but finding that 'the Lord made strangers friends unto mee', and resolving, 'all the unkindnese that I mett wth and uniustice from others was but to bring aboutt what was determined for my benefit & hapenese',⁶⁴ Halkett uses vocabulary which is noticeably close to the terms in which she described the Bampffield affair in her memoir, a matter to which I will return. For now, I want to concentrate on the way Halkett applies the fourth prescription – that 'another euidence of faith is by recouering the sicke' – to her own life :⁶⁵

how often hath the hand of faith raised mee outt of my bed of sicknese when to all apearance I was liker to die then Liue & though I haue had troubles enough to make this life a burthen to mee yett my desire was neither to wish death nor life butt to bee fitt to wellcome either that my God saw fittest for mee & hetherto I haue beene spared for in my lowest Condition I knew & did beleeeue that God was able to raise mee up & to the praise of his great name hee hath now done & often hath hee made these hands of mine wch had made weapons of sins hee hath made instruments of doing good to others who hath bene sicke⁶⁶

If her sicknesses provided evidence of her ability to 'take vup serpents withoutt hurt', Halkett's recoveries offer proof of her vocation to tend to the sick herself. To the extent that she records her mental condition, it is severely constrained within religious parameters: wishing neither for a painless death nor a full recovery, her ambitions extend only 'to bee fitt to wellcome either that my God saw fittest for mee'. Halkett's is a pious mind that passively accepts the commissions God issues, without complaint or comment beyond the hope to fulfil them. In fact, by taking the passage from Mark's gospel as her text, and arguing her conformity to the criteria for membership of the devout, Halkett might be regarded as indulging in the sort of typological behaviour described by E Pearlman, in which the autobiographer casts

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp.229-230.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.240.

⁶⁶ Ibid, pp.240-242.

him- or herself as 'a contemporary neotype' of Biblical models.⁶⁷ In Halkett's case, her life is prefigured by the apostles who, according to Matthew's version of the same part of Christ's life, were commissioned to 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give'.⁶⁸ Victoria Burke describes essentially the same behaviour in early modern women's autobiographical writing, characterising such texts as presenting 'an unobtrusive but important form of authorship, one that enabled self-expression by placing all of the works' authority in the Word of God'.⁶⁹

Halkett's later books of meditations take a more diaristic form. On Saturday 19 September 1696, she set to reviewing her fluctuating health over the past week. The comings and goings of good health and ill left her uncertain; she had, she reports, 'beene under such intermission of better & worse in my health that it was very doubtfull what to conclude of my selfe'.⁷⁰ Reporting that 'att the worst I had nothing violent either of sicknese or paine though often great faintnese', Halkett's survey of her salvation in this entry is, if anything, located with more social precision than in her early meditation:

The Lord was pleased to spare mee this last night & brought mee to the light of a New day Where as hee thought fitt to take away rather A man in the strength of his Age Who was well & going aboutt the dutys of his Calling since I was sicke And I am spared & hee taken away hauing beene in violent paine some days butt yett his death unexpected.⁷¹

Her spiritual condition is brought into focus not by the reporting of her symptoms alone, but by comparison with the lot of another, differently dealt-to by God. In this practice, Halkett bears similarity to Josselin, who was certainly not averse to

⁶⁷ Pearlman, "Typological Autobiography in Seventeenth-Century England", p.95.

⁶⁸ Matthew, 10: 8.

⁶⁹ Victoria Burke, "My Poor Returns": Devotional Manuscripts by Seventeenth-Century Women', *Parergon*, 29:2 (2012), 47-68, p.50.

⁷⁰ NLS, MS. 6501, p.318.

⁷¹ Ibid.

interpreting the ill-fortunes of others as examples of God's providential treatment of himself and his family.⁷² The comparisons and contrasts stack up: Halkett is elderly while the man was 'in the strength of his Age'; she ails while he 'was well' (though 'in violent paine'); her death is anticipated soon, his 'unexpected'. Further, the man, perhaps a minister, had been 'going aboutt the dutys of his Calling' while Halkett had admitted in an earlier part of the manuscript to having 'beene pestered wth thoughts unsuitable in my approaches to God either in prayer or reading', an experience that forced her, first, 'to question wth my selfe if itt were nott better for mee to forbear praying then turne itt into sin' and, then, to dismiss such thoughts as 'proceeding from the tempter'.⁷³ This thought process, inscribed in a diaristic manuscript, seems to offer conclusive evidence of self-reflection, but it also suggests the inherent dangers in that practice. When Halkett comes to assess the condition of her soul in sickness, she does not do so by inward self-examination, nor even solely by analysing God's dealing with her through her symptoms. The analysis of body and soul is made meaningful by comparison to the health and condition of another person.

Nor have the textual anchors for her self-writing been cast off. Halkett has broadened her scope from simply meditating on scriptural verses (although this part of the text does contain a number of biblical citations written into the margins). Her first point of direct reference is the French monk, Jean du Vergier de Hauranne, commonly known as the Abbé de Saint-Cyran:

L'Abte de St Cyran first Tome Page 376 says There is nothing so fauorable as sicknese for a Christian that hath hope and obedience for that is the only euill that Jesus Christ left wholly intire to vs wthout taking part during his

⁷² In 1644, Josselin reported, 'god gave us very good newes this weeke, wee h(e)ard of divers hopkills burnt downe at Captain Chipburnes, and Knights of Hinningham, wee preserved from fire, Lord still keepe us'. Josselin, *Diary* (1991), p.18.

⁷³ NLS, MS. 6501, p.245.

life. for it is a new passion distinct fr his wch wee ought to make well,
because if wee escape from the sicknese, our Vertue increases in this world
And if God calls vs to himselfe our glory well bee increased in heauen.⁷⁴

By reference to Saint-Cyran, Halkett can indulge again her typological impulse to read her sickness as 'a new passion' and a necessary one, although she is careful to note that her trial is 'distinct fr' Christ's. The argument that sickness, being an evil the crucifixion did not take away from the world, represents the only genuine trial that a person can undergo to a heavenly end offers a framework for Halkett's approach to her illness. In the early 1660s, she resolved to bless the Lord, 'euen when he seemes to threaten much or to Corect mee, wch I know I shall diserue'.⁷⁵ Having made that resolution, she acknowledged that 'none of these things Comes by chance butt by the determined will of the Lord whose praise shall bee Continually in my mouth. for hee that hath deliuered mee out of many sicknesses paines & distresses can doe itt still therfore I will quietly waite for the saluation of god my soule shall make her brest in the Lord the humble shall heare therof & bee glad'.⁷⁶ In that example, Halkett reads her sickness and recovery as evidence of God's just intervention in her life, her obvious response being to redouble her efforts in his praise. In the later meditation – aided by an intermediating text – sickness has developed into a spiritually meaningful experience mirroring Christ's passion.

But the (Catholic) Abbé is not Halkett's only textual authority. Next, she turns to St Paul for a typological model. Although she admits that Paul does not mention sickness 'in the Catalogue of his suferings', Halkett insists, 'yett it is implied'.⁷⁷ The verse to which she is referring is Colossians 1:24: in her version, 'I fill up that wch is behind of the aflections of Christ in my flesh'. Put simply, Paul regarded his own

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp.318-319.

⁷⁵ NLS, MS. 6491, p.301.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.304-305.

⁷⁷ NLS, MS. 6501, p.319.

physical suffering as supplementary to that of Christ. The model works both ways, as Halkett acknowledges: 'In this hee was like Our Saviour Who in al the afflecons of his people hee was afflicted and ye Angell of his presence saued them'.⁷⁸ But if Halkett, with theological and scriptural authority, sees Christ's suffering as the type through which she reads her own, she interprets her recovery differently:

Lord I beleeeue thou canst as effectually by the word of thy powr raise mee to Newnese of Life as thou dist Lazarus from the Graue And then whether I Liue or dye Christ will bee unto mee both in life & death aduantage.⁷⁹

Biblical types, especially that of Christ, demand careful handling. Jesus may provide a model for patient endurance, but Lazarus is the model for recovery. The restoration of Halkett's health comes not so she can redeem the world's sins, but so she may survive as a living demonstration of Christ's mercy. In the margin beside this part of her text, she entered the scriptural reference John 11:4, announcing the meaningful nature of illness: 'When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby'. Beneath, Halkett noted John 11:43 ('And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth'), although perhaps the fortieth verse gives better expression to her argument: 'Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?'

What relation do these volumes of meditation bear to Halkett's memoir of her life before her marriage? Like Rich's diary, 'Specialities' and 'Meditations', Halkett's devotional and autobiographical texts share identical layout. The autobiography is, however, a larger text than any of the meditations, they being collected in octavo volumes of various dimensions, while the autobiography is a quarto text.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.320.

Additionally, Halkett does not write scriptural citations into the margins of the memoir. Its first page is badly damaged and the text ends abruptly, so it is impossible to tell whether the volume ever contained an index or contents list, but other conventions of printed texts appear: a small margin is drawn into the right- and left-hand and the upper and lower edges of each page, and Halkett numbered the pages in their upper corners.

Some differences between the memoir and the meditations may be explained by the distinct purpose Halkett appears to have seen for the autobiography. Halkett left off writing her meditations to take up the memoir, giving an account of what she had been doing when she returned. 'Though it be long since I left off, what is hitherto writ here: yet the occasion of it may be of some advantage to me if the Lord sees fit to give a seasonable opportunity to divulge it by representing my unparalleled misfortunes and the wonderful power and mercy of God in supporting me under them; which being an evidence of the Lord's compassion may incline others to the greater charity whose severe censure of me occasioned an interruption to the conclusion of this book to relate a true account of my life'.⁸⁰ Quoting that passage, Trill notes, 'Halkett self-consciously writes to set the record straight',⁸¹ drawing a contrast with her usual practice of writing in the meditative mode of spiritual autobiography. This appears to be true but, as Ezell has argued, Halkett's use of print apparatus in both memoir and meditative writing implies that she regarded both as lasting records, envisaging a readership beyond her private circle.

Halkett's assertion of her good intentions in the autobiography appears to be confirmed by her body and mind being of a piece. When she receives disturbing

⁸⁰ NLS, MS. 6494, p.294.

⁸¹ Trill 'Beyond Romance?', p.452.

news – such as the dual information that Bampffield was married and gravely ill – her reaction is physical. In this case, she 'fell so extreemly sicke that none expected life for mee'.⁸² So dramatic a psychosomatic reaction might give encouragement to readings of Halkett's autobiography as a work of romantic self-expression, but her sickness is not described in such terms. Fearing herself close to death, Halkett performed the appropriate social and religious offices: 'and having taken my last leave (as I thought) of them all, I desired Mr. N. (the chaplaine) to recomende mee to the hands of my Redeemer, and I lay waiting till my change should come'.⁸³ She ascribes her recovery to God's mercy, which 'would nott then condemne mee into hell, nor his justice suffer mee to goe to heaven; and therefor continued mee longer upon earth that I might know the infinitenesse of his power who could suport mee under that load of calamitys'.⁸⁴ Her recovery is described in social and theological terms:

I found sencibly like a returne of my spiritts, wth Mrs. Cullcheth seeing, came to mee and told mee if I saw another in that condition I could prescribe what was fitt for them; and therefore itt were a neglect of duty if I did not use what meanes I thought might conduce to my recovery. Her discourse made me recollect what I had by mee that was proper for mee.⁸⁵

Persuaded that she is both a healer and a patient, Halkett's recovery is founded on her medical knowledge and her sense of her Christian duty to apply it. The same theology, from Mark 16:17-18, that Halkett used in meditation during the early 1660s applies here: the apostles had a fundamental duty to heal ('they shall lay hands on the sicke and they shall receouer'). In this case, social discourse with a concerned party, rather than individual self-scrutiny, leads her to that conclusion.

An episode of illness late in the text finds Halkett dangerously sick and

⁸² BL, Add. MS. 32376, f.19v.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid, ff.19v-20r.

without access to a physician. Realising the severity of the illness (brought on following the parliamentary army's raid of Fyvie Castle, from where she assisted the Earl of Dunfermline's flight) Halkett reports, 'I concluded that the Lord had determined now to putt an end to all my troubles, and death was very welcome to mee. Only I begged some releefe from ye violent paine I had, wch was in yt extreamitty that I never felt any thing exceed itt'.⁸⁶ Again, she was restored to health, regarding her illness in almost the typological terms of the meditations, acknowledging, 'itt seemes itt was only sentt for triall, and to lett mee find the experience of the renued testimony of God's faver in raising mee from the gates of death'.⁸⁷ Again, Halkett's recovery is occasioned by social interaction with godly people. 'During my sicknese I was much obleiged to the frequentt visitts of most of ye ladys thereaboutts, but particularly the Lady Ardrose; and Mr. D. Forcett and Mr. H. Rimer seldome missed a day of beeing with mee. They were pious good men, and there Conversation was very agreeable to mee',⁸⁸ she reports. In spite of the differences Halkett's autobiography appears to present to her books of meditations, there are bibliographical and practical similarities. Pious discourse and devotional practice are her priorities in both; both assert Halkett's behaviour as that of a good Christian, sometimes prefigured by scriptural prototypes. On recovery from the illness at Fyvie, her first recorded act was to attend church.

ALICE THORNTON

Alice Thornton presents a similar case of a woman who felt an urge to justify herself, and, like Halkett's, Thornton's manuscript life-writing makes significant use of print

⁸⁶ Ibid, f.50v.

⁸⁷ Ibid, f.51r.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

conventions, merging the practices of texts designed for circulation with those of personal, meditative writing. Thornton's autobiographical texts make much of her own illnesses as well as her family's, developing narrative personae as, in Anne Lear's phrase, 'an intensely suffering yet humbly accepting and resigned Christian woman', as well as the purveyor of considerable medical expertise.⁸⁹ Lear indicates inconsistencies in Thornton's autobiographical personae, further light on which can be shed by attending to the textual origins of her life-writing.

Thornton's meditative writing does not appear to have been practised so concertedly as Halkett's, but hers too is a life written in several texts. Unfortunately, it is principally known through the imperfect Victorian edition, compiled from three manuscript sources (one of which is now lost), edited and coalesced into a single narrative.⁹⁰ The two surviving manuscripts are held in the British Library. The first is an octavo notebook containing what Thornton describes as 'deliverances' recorded in chronological order. Like Halkett, Thornton has numbered her pages and includes an index at the end of the volume.⁹¹ The second manuscript is a quarto volume, written in a clearer hand than the first; although its pages have also been numbered, several are left blank. The text is divided into two parallel sections, each offering a narrative of Thornton's life since the death of her husband. The first is titled, 'An Account of memorable Affaires, and Accidents, on my selfe & Family & Children with Deliuerances, and Meditations thereon since my Widdowed condition since Sept:

⁸⁹ Anne Lear, 'Thank God for Haemorrhoids! Illness and Identity in a Seventeenth-Century Woman's Autobiography', *Women's Writing*, 12:3 (2005), 337-245, p.344.

⁹⁰ Alice Thornton, *The Autobiography of Mrs Alice Thornton*, ed. C. Jackson (Durham: Andrews, 1875). Jackson does attribute the various parts of his hybrid *Autobiography* to their manuscript sources and, sometimes, gives parallel text in footnote where the sources offered multiple descriptions of a single event. His text does not, however, acknowledge, the textual differences between his manuscript sources.

⁹¹ BL, Add. MS. 88897/1.

17th: 1668',⁹² while the second bears the heading, 'The Remarkeble Passages of my Life with my three Children And of ye Afflictions: Tryalls: Prouidences Mercys and Deliuerances Receaued from God since ye Death of my deare Husband. the first yeare of my Widdowhood Condition Since September: 17: 1668'.⁹³

These distinctions may create the impression that Thornton's surviving manuscripts represent two different types of text – one an example of devotional writing along the lines described by Burke, valuing 'repetition, assimilation, reiteration, and meditations upon the Word';⁹⁴ the other a self-justifying treatise, written in the face of family feuds and a husband who died in poverty, aiming, as Trill says of Halkett's autobiography, 'to set the record straight'. The distinction, however, is not so sharp. Thornton's book of deliverances, although it has much in common with Heywood's notebooks, in which he recorded similar examples of divine protection, makes as much use of the apparatus of printed works as the volume containing 'The Remarkeble Passages of my Life'. 'The Remarkeble Passages' meanwhile contains differing versions of the same material, inscribed with a good deal of blank space between them, implying that it was a work in progress, not a completed, definitive record. In Raymond Anselment's phrase, 'Thornton apparently wrote and rewrote her life, adding events she remembered and expanding as well as reshaping earlier memories'.⁹⁵

The first manuscript, however, bears some hallmarks of meditative life-writing. Thornton's frequent practice is to write a passage of prose describing a difficult experience, followed by a short prayer of thanksgiving for her deliverance.

⁹² BL, MS. Add. 88897/2, p.19.

⁹³ Ibid, p.109.

⁹⁴ Burke, V, 'My Poor Returns', p.47.

⁹⁵ Raymond Anselment, 'The Deliverances of Alice Thornton: A Recreation of a Seventeenth-Century Life', *Prose Studies*, 19:1 (1996), 19-36, p.21.

The prayers (mostly omitted from the Victorian text) reveal much about Thornton's approach to adversity and illness. In one passage, she describes her recovery from a severe bout of smallpox in 1642 (when she was sixteen). Her account of the sickness is brief and largely conventional – she reports being 'dangerously ill & inwardly sick', 'in much perill of my life', 'withstanding all ye meanes of Phisicians', and 'well nigh death', and she blesses God's name 'wch pleased him to heare pettions for my life, & to spaire me in much mercy'.⁹⁶ More than with Thornton's symptoms, the meditation is concerned with the condition of Frank Kelly, a boy her family had charitably taken in and who had fallen sick at about the same time. In Thornton's account, Kelly is an exemplar of patience and piety in disease. A former Catholic, turned Anglican by his adoptive family, Kelly receives praise as 'a true convert, & a patterne of much goodnesse & vertue'.⁹⁷ He is selfless to a fault, ('al along his sicknesse, still praied for me; when he heard I was in danger of death, desired with teares that God would be pleased to spaire my life, & to blesse me, yt I might live to doe much good to others, as to him, & yt he might rather be taken away & I spaired').⁹⁸ He is also an exemplar of piety ('This good childe, whom He had fitted for Himselfe, died vttering many gracious speeches out of ye Scripture, & abundance of pathaticall praiers & pettitions to God for himselfe, & mother, & vs all, wth hearty thanks offten to God, Who had taken him out of yt wicked way, as he called it').⁹⁹ In Thornton's description, Kelly's death matches some of the criteria that the Church of Ireland Bishop, Jeremy Taylor, would later recommend as necessary for 'Holy Dying', including, in his 1651 work on that subject, a number of Psalms which 'The

⁹⁶ BL, MS. Add. 88897/1, p.72.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.73.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.74.

sick man may recite or hear recited [...] in the intervals of his agony'.¹⁰⁰

In this light, Thornton's description of piety in adversity might serve as an exemplar should she read through her book of deliverances again. That was not, however, her immediate reason for recording Kelly's death. She did that, she says, in order 'to take especiall notice of ye great goodnesse of God to vs, in giveing vs opportunity to bring this poor soule out of ye darkenesse & ignorance of his sinfull education'.¹⁰¹ Rather than identifying Kelly as a paragon of devout patience, his piety in death was a mark of the Thorntons' success in recovering the boy from his misguided education. The event is recorded as an act of God's providence to the family.

The temptation to read a self-reflexive expression of fondness for, or kinship with, Kelly by Thornton ought to be tempered by the thanksgiving prayer that follows this report. Written to bless the name of 'ye great & gracious God, & father of mercys ye Ld most high, wch had compassion uppon me a poore fraile wretch, & spaired my life, from this distruction in this sad sicknesse',¹⁰² the prayer does not mention Kelly, who received no such mercy. Its purpose is not to muse on Thornton's personal relationship to Kelly mentally, socially or even spiritually. Rather, she sees her recovery from sickness as equivalent to her surviving the Irish uprising of 1641: 'O Lord lett it be in mercy yt thou hast preserued me these wonderfull manners of all thy last & former deliuerences. Make me I beseech thee a vessell fitted for thy seruice heere yt there signall deliuerance yt thou hast shewed to me in this Citty &

¹⁰⁰ Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (London: R.R., 1651), p.170. The recitation of scriptural texts on the deathbed was a staple of Puritan piety. Walton reports that in his dying hours, Herbert, 'sung on earth such Hymns and Anthems, as the Angels and he, and Mr. Farrer, now sing in Heaven'. Izaak Walton, *The Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert* (London: Marriot, 1670), p.77.

¹⁰¹ BL, MS. Add. 88897/1, p.74.

¹⁰² Ibid, p.75.

Ireland from thy Enimies, who would haue deuouered very soone & swallowed vs quicke from those imminent dangers in ye time of ye seige'.¹⁰³ Thornton takes physical and political events as evidence of God's dealing with her. Her challenge is to accept this treatment without falling into self-absorption. Having been made 'partaker of these outward ordinances', her next step is to pray that they should be effective: 'Grant yt I may receaue & applie all thy meritts to heale my wounded soule and pardon my Sinns'.¹⁰⁴ In attempting to set herself in the way of piety, she has recourse to a Biblical type: 'I beseech thee bless thy handmaide, & receaue and accept this thakesgiuing & praise from my ♡. as thou didst from thy seruant David who loued thee from his youth as I haue desired to sett God allwaies before me yt I may not offend'.¹⁰⁵ Her desire not to offend God is bolstered by her conformity to the example of David, whose love of God she knew to have been genuine, having read of its being rewarded with God's blessing.

This example illustrates Thornton's book of deliverances conforming to various norms of early modern meditative writing: its record of personal experience as evidence of divine providence, its privileging of religious propriety, its tendency to see personal and political events as equivalent, and its deployment of Biblical exemplars for self-expression. But, like Halkett's, Thornton's reflections betray a consciousness of print convention. A lengthy discussion of her 'greatt Sickness att Oswoldkirke' of 1661 is underlined with a hand-drawn, decorative border of flowers and fleurs de lis. The design seems to have been imported from print traditions, not necessarily to indicate a work designed for public circulation, but rather to decorate and mark the conclusion of a period of particular trouble for Thornton's body and

¹⁰³ Ibid, p.77.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.78.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

soul.

The onset of illness was characterised by cold and an 'Aguish Temper' followed by vomiting, and the symptoms were not responsive to bloodletting or cordials until, Thornton says, she 'dranke a draught of cold water, wch more refreshed my Thirsty soule'.¹⁰⁶ But that relief did not last long and, within four days, Thornton experienced dire medical and spiritual consequences. She was 'brought into an Exceeding weakenesse & feeblenesse of Bodie & Spiritt' and, worse, 'into a seeming Spirituall desertion from God, wch was not to be long indured wth out sinking under ye Pressures of ye deuine displeasures'.¹⁰⁷ Like Hoby, Thornton's illness reached a stage at which she believed herself subject to Satanic temptation:

I apprehended in this my weakenesse my Etternall State to be in a Lost condition, by reason of my Sinnes; And Satans Accusing me falsely from my sorrowes & temporall sufferings Casting multitude of doubtings into my heart as that Surely I did not belong to God. And I was not his Seruant because he followed me wth such Curses Afflictions sicknes & troubles in this world, wch seemed to be Curses rather then such trialls, as he vsed to Lay upon those yt were his Children¹⁰⁸

Thornton's self-reflexivity – examining herself and doubting her faith – is registered as a sign of her weakness, possibly even a symptom of her illness. Her Protestant concern should solely be for her 'Etternall State' but, this being lost, she falls into doubt, allowing her imagination the freedom to interpret God's application of sickness as punitive 'Curses' rather than benign corrections. Soon after, Thornton acknowledges Satan's effect on her interior life and takes responsibility for her doubts, ostensibly so that her soul might be saved should she die: 'The Deiuill Accusing as he is tearmed ye accuser of ye brethren my concience could not excuse me from too many failings My sicknesse & weakenesse threatning my desolation

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.188.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

each minuitt, and I had none to giue me spirituall comfort and my soule was sad euen to ye death'.¹⁰⁹

Almost immediately, Thornton remits control of herself to God, who works on her thoughts 'in a wonderous manner to begin to giue me some comfort from sinkeing in my hopes & to stay my selfe on him when I was all most past hopes by reason of my weaknesse'.¹¹⁰ To achieve this, she returned to scripture, obtaining her new hope, 'out of ye Blessed Portion of Scripture, wch or deare Sauior spake in St Matt the ii chap. & 28: 29: 30 verces; wch like ye lightning breakeing in to a darke place thus it pearced in to ye secrett darkenesse of my sorrowfull heart & deieted soule'.¹¹¹ The purpose of these verses is to argue the redemptive power of Christ in times of distress and despair: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest', says Matthew 11:28, a verse that Lancelot Andrewes also recommends in his *Manuall of Directions for the Visitation of the Sicke*, as proof of the value of turning to Christ in illness.¹¹² And Thornton has another script to buoy her up in her affliction; referring to Revelation 5:5,¹¹³ she reports, 'Butt Loe in this my distresse the Lion of ye Tribe of Juda put to flight for me, as he had don for him selfe, when he tempted him to question his sonship'.¹¹⁴ Towards the end of the passage, she acknowledges the critical role the Word had played in her recovery, saying of Christ, 'he it was yt giue me This word & sett it home by his Spiritt to stay my drooping heart, euen ready to faint & perish for want of spirituall food'.¹¹⁵ The

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p.189.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid, pp.189-190.

¹¹² Lancelot Andrewes, *A Manuall of Directions for the Visitation of the Sicke* (London: Cartwright, 1642), sig.K8v.

¹¹³ And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

¹¹⁴ BL, MS. Add. 88897/1, p.190.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, pp.190-191.

decorative border that marks the end of this passage, then, can be interpreted in bibliographic terms. It is perhaps a sign of flamboyance, designed to add garlands to a narrative of conflict and victory, but its being a borrowed convention from print underscores the claim that Thornton's description of her recovery is expressed formally as a divine triumph of her scriptural reading and meditative writing over the Satanic irregularities of her body and mind.

The merging of personal meditative habits with behaviour more often associated with print circulation is equally evident in both the book of deliverances and 'The Remarkeble Passages', a volume which appears to have had the purpose of 'setting the record straight' and to have circulated among Thornton's family. In that work, Thornton revisits the Oswoldkirke sickness, this time casting it against a backdrop of family debt, explaining that while she was 'under the sad oppression of a dreadfull Tormenting Feauer', she was also beset by a family feud, culminating in legal action: 'Wth the loss of my deare Mother & her sweet society the troubles of the family, by suits, of my brother against my poore husband and allso nettleton suing him for 1000£'.¹¹⁶ In this version, personal, financial and spiritual accounting converge, as Thornton comes to realise that, after her death, her husband will have the power to disinherit her children. That discovery, 'Wch wrought very ill', came while she was 'still fearing my owne death, each houer: soe yt I was desolate of all suply or assistance, & benefit of any to assistt me in yt condition'.¹¹⁷ The situation is resolved, satisfactorily or not, in the same manner as in the book of deliverances:

by ye wonderfull Powr of my good God he did cause me to thinke off & meditate on St Matt. 11. Chapt and two last verses. Come unto me all yea yt Labor & what my distress was at yt time I haue made a booke of meditations uppon it, & to sett forth the wonderfull Power of God in my

¹¹⁶ BL, MS. Add. 88897/2, p.29.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

deliuerance on wch I recoured my health & strength againe¹¹⁸

In both cases, Thornton let her individual agency be diminished, deferring to scriptural precedent. In the deliverances, the scriptures raise her from the throes of self-reflection, and thereby provide certainty where Satan spread doubt. In the 'Remarkeble Passages', her recourse to scripture testifies to her good intentions, and restores her to control of her property (thereby, as de Grazia might argue, restoring her identity – 'removing what a person *has* simultaneously takes away what a person *is*'). But, in the second case, it is not only the return to the scriptures that restored her. Thornton's reporting that 'at yt time I haue made a booke of meditations uppon it' implies that her meditative writing was important to her reputation among her family as well: it was important that she be seen to have held to the appropriate practice of self-scrutiny and meditative writing, even (perhaps especially) at times of duress. Both volumes are part of the textual network that constructs Thornton's identity privately and socially: her reference to the 'deliverances' as an authority on her pious behaviour implies a habit of intertextual citation that, although their origins were different, places her meditative and self-justifying writing and the life-stories they construct in a relationship of co-dependence.

RICHARD BAXTER

As well as the creation of multiple, interrelating texts, we are beginning to see the combination of multiple forms of life writing into single texts, with Halkett and Thornton commingling devotional and self-justifying modes of writing. Richard Baxter's posthumously edited and published memoir complicated the picture further, deploying a miscellany of life-writing habits – among them financial accounting,

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

typology and self-justification – in what was posthumously issued as a single text. Baxter was working on a memoir in his final years, and the edition that was printed as *Reliquiae Baxterianae* in 1696 was compiled from his manuscripts by Matthew Sylvester. It has been the subject of much complaint. 'No book of its importance was ever worse edited', remarked Alexander Gordon,¹¹⁹ while William Orme 'exceedingly regretted that it fell into the hands of so incompetent an editor as Sylvester'.¹²⁰ The essential facts are that the manuscripts, at some point, have become separated; part of the text is held by the Dr Williams Library in London, with another portion in the British Library. Some parts have been lost.¹²¹ Sylvester's edition gives a mostly accurate transcription of Baxter's papers, but makes a baffling number of deletions and re-orderings, cutting a number of passages midway through and either omitting their remaining text or printing it in another part of the volume. Some of Sylvester's omissions appear to have been made on the advice of Edmund Calamy, who persuaded him not to include 'things, relating to Mr. Baxter himself, about a dream of his, and his bodily disorders, and physical management of himself'.¹²² A final fault of Sylvester's edition is that it does not recognise distinctions between the various types of life-recording that Baxter's papers seem to present. One such distinction can be read in the variations in the size of the paper Baxter uses. The majority of the British Library's part of the text is written on folio sheets, the earlier pages of which leave margins ruled at the right-hand edge of the recto pages and the left-hand edge of the verso. Other parts of that text are written without margins on smaller sheets, and in a

¹¹⁹ Alexander Gordon, 'Richard Baxter', in Leslie Stephen, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography, Volume Two* (London: Macmillan, 1885).

¹²⁰ William Orme, *The Life and Times of Richard Baxter*, 2 vols. (London: Duncan, 1830), II, p.394.

¹²¹ For an account of *Reliquiae Baxterianae*'s print and manuscript versions, see Geoffrey Nuttall, 'The MS. of *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696)', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 6 (1955), 73-79.

¹²² Edmund Calamy, *An Historical Account of My Own Life, With Some Reflections on the Times I Have Lived In (1671-1731)*, ed. John Towill Rutt, 2 vols. (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830), I, p.378.

less careful hand.

Baxter's papers display elements of the textual economy that Smyth has convincingly shown was more formally at work in Anne Clifford's life-writing. Smyth argues for 'the central role of financial accounting to the production of Clifford's written lives – as an early stage of her life-writing, and as a model for the process',¹²³ charting the movement of particular episodes in her life-writing 'from waste book to journal to ledger',¹²⁴ and concluding that 'The formal presentation in Great Books suggests the elevated status of the autobiography and the annual chronicles, and implies these records (unlike the diary) were intended for posterity'.¹²⁵ Relics of a similar process to that which Smyth shows in Clifford and which Dawson unearths from Pepys's diaries can be found in *Reliquiae Baxterianae*. Kathleen Lynch observes that the copiousness of text, written and rewritten, that characterises Baxter's autobiographical writing is 'more often associated with the practices of diary-keeping and commonplacing'.¹²⁶ In spite of Calamy persuading Sylvester to leave out much material relating to 'bodily disorders', the text presents an accumulation of data about Baxter's ailments and symptoms and, frequently, Baxter pauses to perform a summary stocktake of his bodily condition. Among multiple complaints are '*Haemorrhagie*' that he claims cost him 'about a Gallon of Blood' in six days,¹²⁷ and a two-week fever that 'ended in a Crisis of Sweat and Urine', leaving Baxter 'so macerated and weak, that it was long e're I recovered that little strength I

¹²³ Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, p.3.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.88.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Kathleen Lynch, *Protestant Autobiography in the Seventeenth-Century Anglophone World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.250. The argument has also been made for Baxter's memoir as a reflection of the political history through which Baxter had lived, offering 'a comprehensive account of his own past in relation to the nation's past'. See N. H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Non-Conformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press), p.84.

¹²⁷ Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ed. Matthew Sylvester (London: Parkhurst, Robinson, Lawrence and Dunton, 1696), I&II, p.10.

had before'.¹²⁸ Other symptoms include, 'incredible Inflammations of Stomach, Bowels, Back, Sides, Head, Thighs, as if I had been daily fill'd with Wind' and 'Inflations beginning usually in my Reins, and all my Back, daily torn, and greatly pained'.¹²⁹

Often, Baxter reads religious and vocational meaning into the features of his illness, in one example, enumerating the advantages of continuing ministerial work through sickness:

And this I found through all my Life to be an unvaluable mercy to me:
For,

1. It greatly weakened Temptations.
2. It kept me in a great Contempt of the World.
3. It taught me highly to esteem of time: so that if any of it past away in idleness or unprofitableness, it was so long a pain and burden to my mind! So that I must say to the Praise of my most wise Conductor, that time hath still seemed to me much more precious than Gold or any Earthly Gain, and its Minutes have under the name of Pastime, since I understood my Work.
4. It made me study and preach things necessary, and a little stirred up my sluggish heart, to speak to Sinners with some Compassion, as a dying Man to dying Men.¹³⁰

This part of the work appears on the larger-sized paper that is more formally laid out, implying that Baxter was writing in a mode here similar to that which Smyth detected in Clifford's 'Great Books', and which Heywood also practised at each year's end: making a summary account from the available records. The illness from which he distills these advantages struck him between the ages of twenty one and twenty three. It was a dangerous sickness, with Baxter recording 'my Weakness was so great, that I expected not to live above a year; and my own Soul being under the serious apprehension of the Matters of another World'.¹³¹ The experience left him, 'exceeding desirous to Communicate those Apprehensions to such ignorant, presumptuous,

¹²⁸ Ibid, I&II, p.55.

¹²⁹ Ibid, III, p.173.

¹³⁰ Ibid, I&II, p.21. For the manuscript version, see BL, MS. Egerton 2570, f.2v.

¹³¹ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, I&II, p.12.

careless Sinners as the World aboundeth with'.¹³² Indeed, it changed the course of Baxter's devotional life, moving him from scholarly theology to practical divinity. Initially nervous to preach, considering himself unqualified, Baxter now found himself 'expecting to be so quickly in another World, the great Concernments of miserable Souls, did prevail with me against all these Impediments; and being conscious of a thirsty desire of Mens Conversion and Salvation, and of some competent perswading Faculty of Expression, which fervent Affections might help to actuate, I resolv'd that if one or two Souls only might be won to God, it would easily recompence all the dishonour which for want of Titles I might undergo from Men!'"¹³³

Baxter's evangelical willingness to win miserable Souls to God in the face of any dishonour he might receive, taps into a critical feature of his self-presentation in illness. In the fourth ministerial advantage of ill-health, he celebrates his reduction to the condition of a sinner. There is an embedded, typological comparison to Christ in Baxter's resolution to suffer dishonour to a pious end, and in his wish 'to speak to Sinners with some Compassion, as a dying Man to dying Men'. A summary of 'the Benefits which God afforded me by Affliction', brings out the Christ comparison, announcing, 'I humbly bless his gracious Providence, who gave me his Treasure in an Earthen Vessel, and trained me up in the School of Affliction, and taught me the *Croß of Christ* so soon; that I might be rather *Theologus Crucis*, as *Luther* speaketh, than *Theologus Gloriæ*; and a *Croß-bearer*, than a *Croß-maker* or *Imposer*'.¹³⁴

Although Baxter was anxious about his 'personal insufficiency, for want of that measure of Learning and Experience',¹³⁵ his claim to being a '*Croß-bearer*', rather than a '*Croß-maker* or *Imposer*', privileged lived experience over intellectual

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

exercise. The significance Baxter attached to practical 'Experience' is revealing about his self-scrutiny. 'I never thought I understood any thing till I could *anatomize* it, and see the *parts distinctly*, and the *Conjunction* of the parts as they make up the whole',¹³⁶ he claimed. Baxter's method of life-writing was to assemble a mass of information, after which he would dismantle and analyse it such that he was able to 'see the *parts distinctly*'. In this, Baxter's memoir bears comparison to Josselin's Puritan diary and Hooke's experimental one. Baxter's choice of 'anatomizing'¹³⁷ as the metaphor for his task suggests a process of applied self-scrutiny; when he accounted for illness in his memoir, he was performing an act of looking into his body and examining its working in relation to that of his soul:

And because the Case of my *Body* had a great Operation upon my Soul, and the History of it is somewhat necessary to the right understanding of the rest, and yet it is not a Matter worthy to be oft mentioned, I shall here together give you a brief Account of the most of my Afflictions of that kind, reserving the mention of some particular Deliverences to the proper place.¹³⁸

The method is clear: to list his symptoms, and to acknowledge and enumerate the benefits he has gained. But it was not easy: working without an amanuensis, Baxter's illness impinged severely on his ability to write. 'For all the Pains that my Infirmities ever brought upon me, were never half so grievous an Affliction to me, as the unavoidable loss of my time, which they occasioned',¹³⁹ he complains. 'Weakness of the Stomach'¹⁴⁰ prevented him from rising early, and he took long medicinal walks before dinner and supper, adding, 'after Supper I can seldom Study'.¹⁴¹ But Baxter

¹³⁶ Ibid, I&II, p.6.

¹³⁷ 'To anatomize; to cut up, and looke into, the parts of the bodie'. Cotgrave, *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*; 'to Anatomize, to cut up, &c'. Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionary* (London: Richards, 1676).

¹³⁸ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, I&II, p.9.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

persisted with the arduous work of his memoir because he felt it had an important purpose:

Because it is Soul-Experiments which those that urge me to this kind of Writing, do expect that I should especially communicate to others, and I have said little of God's dealing with my Soul since the time of my younger years, I shall only give the Reader so much satisfaction, as to acquaint him truly what Change God hath made upon my Mind and Heart since those unriper times, and wherein I now differ in Judgment and Disposition from my self: and God's Operations on me, I think it somewhat unsavoury to recite them; seeing God's Dealings are much what the same with all his Servants in the main, and the Points wherein he varieth are usually so small, that I think not such fit to be repeated:¹⁴²

Stemming from his self-anatomizing, Baxter's feeling was that his 'Soul-Experiments' – his observations, made from direct experience of God's dealing with his soul – ought to be communicated to others.¹⁴³ This is the culmination of the process I have described, whereby Baxter takes account of his prospects for salvation by maintaining an awareness of his own mortality and practising a sceptical form of self-scrutiny. Illness intervenes when he departs from this self-scepticism. But it has a second use in that, having been corrected by illness – having been a '*Croß-bearer*' – Baxter is better able to ground his ministry in experience. Although he is obsessively detailed in his self-focus, Baxter justifies his autobiographical practice as educational rather than self-expressive. Announcing his intention to acquaint the reader with 'what Change God hath made upon my Mind and Heart since those unriper times', he

¹⁴² Ibid, I&II, p.124.

¹⁴³ Though often-quoted, Baxter's phrase 'Soul-Experiments' has not received much in the way of critical glossing. It is at least worth noting, that 'experiment' was capable of being synonymous with 'experience'. Edward Phillips gave both 'Experience, or Experiment' as meaning 'proof, trial, or practise'. Phillips *The New World of English Words*. Additionally, the word seems to have had a parallel use, for which OED gives instances between 1575 and 1741, meaning 'Practical acquaintance with a person or thing; experience; an instance of this'. This experiential sense seems to have had mostly religious use. The Anglican clergyman Richard Allestree spoke of 'those foretastes of joy that the holy Soul experiments here, which, as I have shewed, infinitely overwhelms all trouble and pain'. Richard Allestree, *A Discourse Concerning the Beauty of Holiness* (London: Soliers, 1679), p113. Whether or not Baxter was borrowing from the lexicon of natural philosophy, his intention was to ground his spiritual reflections on empirical data, directly observed.

promises not an expression of his inward, spiritual experiences – 'God's Dealings' being 'much what the same with all his Servants' – but a cautionary tale designed to have didactic value for 'young unexperienced Christians', directing them, 'what Mind and Course of Life to prefer, by the Judgment of one that hath tryed both before them'.¹⁴⁴

But, even hedged by an insistence on Baxter's sense of public duty, such a process nonetheless ran the risk of attracting – and it did attract – criticism on the grounds of self-importance.¹⁴⁵ Some thirty years earlier, Baxter had issued a robust defence of sceptical self-scrutiny in a treatise entitled *The Mischiefs of Self-ignorance and the Benefits of Self-acquaintance*, a work written partly in response to his dismissal from his ministerial position at Kidderminster. Self-knowledge, Baxter argued, was essential to spiritual engagement: 'Had you not known your self, you had never known your Saivour, your God, your way and your end, as you have done: you had never been so well acquainted with the symptomes and cure of the diseases of the Soul; the nature and exercise of grace, the way of mortification, and the comfortable supports, refreshments and fore-tasts of Heavenly believers'.¹⁴⁶ His case for self-knowledge is consistent with his claim in *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, that it is essential to be constantly observant of 'the Questionings of a doubtful Conscience'.¹⁴⁷ Here, Baxter argues that, although some people leave off self-contemplation 'for fear

¹⁴⁴ *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, I&II, p.14.

¹⁴⁵ Samuel Young accused Baxter of being 'Great in the Eyes of none so much as his own, admired by none so much as by himself.' Samuel Young, *Vindiciæ Anti-Baxterianæ* (London: Standfast, 1696), p.77. He bridled at the equivalence Baxter appeared to see between himself and Christ, demanding of his reader, 'Were you Baptized in his name (he scrupled Pede-baptism Seven Year.) Was Mr Baxter Crucified for you?' Ibid, p.66. And, in a quotation which he either mistakenly or misleadingly ascribes to the Oxfordshire minister John Owen, Young observes, '*I do not think the World so much concerned in me, That I must tell them when I am sick, and when I am well; how old I am; what my Faith and Opinion is in every Controversie on Foot, and what Corruption I last mortified*'. Ibid, p.61.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Baxter, *The Mischiefs of Self-ignorance and the Benefits of Self-acquaintance* (London: White, 1662), sig.A3r.

¹⁴⁷ *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, I&II, p.5.

of being *melancholy*',¹⁴⁸ this amounts to an act of spiritual cowardice: 'They know that conscience hath so much against them, that they dare not hear its accusations and its sentence: They dare not look into the hideous dungeon of their hearts: nor peruse the accounts of their bankrupt souls, nor read the history of their impious unprofitable lives, lest they should be tormented before the time'.¹⁴⁹ Like Donne, Baxter knew that the heart was liable to absorb to pestilent vapours. Rather than a seat of spiritual engagement, Baxter's heart became a 'hideous dungeon'. He continues to regard religious life in cumulative financial terms: hearts that allow themselves to be polluted in this way are 'bankrupt'; those who fail to attend to God's providence and corrections live 'impious unprofitable lives'. Such accounting was a matter of urgency. For Baxter, the humoral body, with its risk of melancholic disorder, held the truths of mankind's sinful nature, and it was only self-scrutiny, rigorously practised, that offered an antidote.

That was the theory, but the danger of self-absorption loomed. On several occasions, Baxter's memoir went into considerable detail about his illnesses, sometimes tending to the obsessive rather than the analytic. Early on, he gave an overview of his medical history, explaining that he was generally of 'a sound Constitution, but very thin and lean and weak, and especially of a great debility of the Nerves'.¹⁵⁰ A detailed medical history follows. He reports suffering from measles aged seven and smallpox at fourteen, after which, 'I too soon after them went into the cold, and after (in a Loosness) went into a River or Brook to wash me; and I eat raw Apples and Pears and Plumbs in great quantities for many years: All which together brought me into a violent Catarrh and Cough, which would not let me sleep quietly

¹⁴⁸ *Mischiefs of Self-ignorance*, sig.B1r.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, I&II, p.9.

in the Night'.¹⁵¹ Now, a chain of events was set off. Smallpox led to the cold, and those things, in tandem with excessive fruit-eating, culminated in the catarrh and cough. Then, 'when this had continued about two years, my Body being very thin, and Consumptions then common in the Country, I was much afraid of a Consumption: And first I did eat great store of raw Garlick, which took off some part of my Cough, but put an Acrimony into my Blood, which naturally was acrimonious'.¹⁵² The sense is that Baxter regards these formative symptoms and illnesses along with God's mercies as helping to develop his adult identity. He mentions two particular mercies, the first being, 'That I was never overwhelm'd with real Melancholy',¹⁵³ an act of providence which would have lessened one of the dangers of self-examination, enabling him to absorb spiritual experience into his heart without fear. The second mercy was, 'that my Pains, though daily and almost continual did not very much disable me from my Duty'.¹⁵⁴ Baxter regarded the principal skills of his ministry to be his ability to 'Study, and Preach, and Walk': his value as an individual lay not solely in his pious, absorbent heart, but partly in his ability to engage with scripture and to communicate it to his parishioners both from the pulpit and by circulating among them.

His ailing body also gave him a spiritual lesson. In a late passage, Baxter gives another detailed account of his symptoms. Now seventy, he records, 'God was pleased so greatly to increase my painful Diseases, as to pass on me the Sentence of a painful death: By constant pain by an incredible quantity of flatulency in Stomach and all the Intestines and reins, from all that I eat or drink, my Stomach not able to digest any meat or drink but turning all to tearing pain; Besides the pain of the Stone

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p.10.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

in Reins and oft in the bladder; and urine black like dirt and mortified blood. But god turneth it to my good, and giveth me a greater willingness to die, than I once thought I should ever have attained'.¹⁵⁵ This return of his gastric and renal condition comes at a crucial moment, just as Baxter is about to be arrested and imprisoned pending trial for sedition. The episode presents Baxter as a sufferer undergoing the trials of his intolerant times. He later describes having to be carried to the sessions house 'in all my pain and weakness', and being forced to 'give bond'¹⁵⁶ when the authorities 'knew that I was not like to break the Behaviour, unless by lying in bed in pain'.¹⁵⁷ Still Baxter regards his illness as divine correction (God 'was pleased so greatly to increase' his pain), and still it has a spiritual purpose as he attempts to remain both conscious of his mortality and sceptical of his motivations. With the illness, God gave him 'greater willingness to die, than I once thought I should ever have attained'. But this act of self-abasement is also one of self-creation; it comes in service of Baxter's self-presentation as 'a *Croß-bearer*, [rather] than a *Croß-maker* or *Imposer*'.

ROGER NORTH

Roger North's idea of autobiographical note-keeping was resolutely non-spiritual. He recommended making a personal record 'of all the Incidents that may afford useful Remarks upon the Course of his Life', in order that 'either his Family or the Public should profit by his Example, and would be known to Posterity truly as he was'.¹⁵⁸ North's autobiography, *Notes of Me*, shows none of the biblical typological behaviour of many spiritual autobiographical texts, nor does it have any evident concern with a search for providence in the author's life. It does, however, bear similarity to many of

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, III, p.198.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, III, p.199.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, III, p.198.

¹⁵⁸ BL, MS. Add. 32526, f.31r.

the religious and non-religious works I have so far examined, bearing the mark of three influences: print culture, financial accounting, and natural philosophical note-taking.

In common with the texts of Halkett and Thornton, North's manuscripts reveal distinct involvement with print conventions. Although the text was unfinished, North had begun compiling an index to *Notes of Me*, which appears on the work's first page, with the three blank pages between that and the text's opening presumably intended to be filled by further index entries. Written in North's hand the text is largely free of corrections or ink blots. Right-hand and upper margins have been observed on each page, with North writing the title 'Notes of Me' into the upper margins (in the later pages, abbreviated to, 'Of Me'). Occasional notes indicating the themes with which the text is dealing are written into the right-hand margins. In addition to these print-influenced habits, familiar from various autobiographical texts, *Notes of Me* includes two further significant traits, implying that he may have envisaged his text being printed. Every sixteen pages, he includes a page signature, with these marks running from 'A' to 'M' (which erroneously appears twice). Wherever a sentence breaks across two pages, North includes a tag word at the bottom of the first to indicate the way the text will run on. He displays this habit in other manuscripts that found their way into print, including the one to which I am about to refer.

North's interest in book-keeping extended to his writing and (anonymously) publishing a treatise on the subject, the manuscript of which is among his papers in the British Library.¹⁵⁹ That treatise gives an explanation of double-entry accounting (or, as North calls it, 'Bookkeeping, in ye method of Debtor and Creditor'),¹⁶⁰ which

¹⁵⁹ BL, MS. Add. 32528. Published as *The Gentleman Accomptant* (London: Curll, 1714).

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, f.3r.

has the benefits of comprehensiveness and clarity that he recommended in autobiography. 'The art of Regular accounting, or bookkeeping', he explained, 'in rule & method is so contract and circumscribed that without a fault nothing can be rescinded from or added to it'.¹⁶¹ In accounting, as in his self-recording, North's chief ambition was to leave a reliable record for later reference. An epigraph written onto the title page of his manuscript advises, 'Doe well unto thy self and men will speak well of thee'.¹⁶²

North's title places his autobiography in the tradition of natural philosophical note-keeping from which Hooke's diary also grows. Peter Millard, the modern editor of *Notes of Me*, observes the similarity of its title to others of North's works: *Cursory Notes of Musicke*, 'Mechanick Notes', and *Cursory Notes of Building*. An explanation, he suggests, is that 'the notes in *Notes of Me* are data of a kind – or at least they are recollections of an alert man which will form the basis of discoveries concerning principles for living',¹⁶³ and this develops into, in North's words, 'a natural history of mankind'.¹⁶⁴ As Mulligan observed of Hooke, North appears to offer his notes in a spirit of experimental investigation with himself as the site of enquiry. To present specific data and reflect upon their implications is his practice throughout the work.

Given the rigour with which North sets out to observe himself, it should perhaps not be surprising to discover that, at times of illness, he preaches stoicism. Echoing Young's criticism of Baxter, North considers it a natural human instinct to make great play of illness, and he disapproves of the habit, remarking, 'I have considered the true reason of this infirmity. And I find it comes all out of fear, and pusillanimity; it is naturall for all people, to thinck, or rather without thinking they

¹⁶¹ Ibid, f.13r.

¹⁶² Ibid, f.2r.

¹⁶³ Roger North, *Notes of Me*, ed. Peter Millard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p.42.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

take it for granted that what is important to them is so to every one els, and in the same degree.'¹⁶⁵ Not only is complaining about illness tedious, North concludes, it is also indecorous. He has this opinion in common (though for different reasons) with Mary Rich, who was distressed by her husband's failure to endure his debilitating gout fits quietly. Finding Charles Rich 'not beareing his paines with that submission to Godes will as I thought he ought to doe', Rich resolved to send up 'strong cryes with teares to God for converting grace for him, indeauering to wrastle with God for repentance for him'.¹⁶⁶ North analyses this tendency in anthropological terms, observing, 'Now all timorous people, fear to dy. And in that species mankind it self may be justly esteemed timorous'.¹⁶⁷ Those especially susceptible, 'are transported, and abandon all discretion and decorum, to the will of fear, which bears all downe before it'.¹⁶⁸ North's method is to draw conclusions not so much about himself but about humanity. Emotion may be an ingrained human trait, but it is one that North clearly feels should be overcome.

In his own case, North bragged, 'when I have bin very ill and with the symptoms of want of good temper, which makes folk run to doctors, as in, or fearing a feavour, I have lett all pass, and eat and drunk with my friends as usuall, tho uneasy and improper, being disposed to endure any thing rather then submitt, and owne my self sick that brought upon me the ordinary importunity, of catchization how I did, and this, and t'other medicin'.¹⁶⁹ He disdained medical intervention and found complaining 'a sort of braveur' in which 'I did not see any good'.¹⁷⁰ Again, social propriety is more important to North than his emotional individuality: his concern is

¹⁶⁵ BL MS. Add. 32506, ff.140r-v.

¹⁶⁶ BL MS. Add. 27352, f.10r.

¹⁶⁷ BL MS. Add. 32506, f.140v.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, f.141v.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, f.142r.

for upholding what is 'usuall' rather than succumbing to 'the ordinary importunity' brought upon him by discussing his physic-taking in company.

This is not to say that North does not complain or worry about his health: sometimes he discusses the matter in lurid detail. Shortly before issuing his denunciation of self-absorption in sickness, North found himself suffering 'pain in my stomack. I gatt some fantastical bandages of dimity make, with hooks and eys; and had a disposition perpetually to eruct. This as I strove so much in when I was alone, thinking if I could rais the wind (as it seemed to be) I should be well. And by a perpetuall straining to eruct, I have fixt on my selfe an eructation, which is but a convulsion of the esofagus, which I shall never quite wear off, and was plainely at first derived from this error of conduct'.¹⁷¹ His condition grew so severe that he found himself suffering feverish delusions:

In my sickness when the feavour began to wear off, in sleeping I had an image of thought, as if a small point or seed within me grew, and swelled as if it would have blowne me up. This came 2 or 3 times, and was great paine and caused the doctor to be sent for, who with a cordiall kept downe the evil. And I conceiv it was but a generall convulsion of the stomack for want of spirits or good order of them. But these sick images are strang things, and few that are sick observe them, but thinck the reality is according to their sence.¹⁷²

The interlude helps demonstrate North's assertion of mind over matter. His dream of a seed growing in his stomach and threatening his life, has such vividness that it impinges on his physical body, causing pain severe enough to require a doctor's attention. But North reasons his dream vision into a manageable definition¹⁷³ ('a

¹⁷¹ Ibid, ff.137v-38r.

¹⁷² Ibid, f.138r.

¹⁷³ This strategy is documented in the clinical psychology of pain. 'People are intrinsically motivated to make sense of experience. Except in extreme cases of depression or in specific circumstances of prolonged restriction or incarceration, people are motivated to reach an understanding of personal events. Until a pain is understood within a system of knowledge, it will interrupt current thinking and promote worry and concern. Knowing what has caused a pain and what it may mean and does not mean is critical for effective coping. Those patients who are most difficult to help are those who repeatedly present with problems that have no known aetiology. Not knowing compounds distress and an uncertain diagnosis leads to an increased belief in illness.' C. Eccleston, 'Role of

generall convulsion of the stomach'), disowning his curious symptoms as illusions ('These sick images are strang things, and few that are sick observe them, but thinck the reality is according to their sence').

Well-grounded reason, to North, is curative. 'I never was perfectly at eas till I had fixt in my mind, 2 grand points of philosophy',¹⁷⁴ he claims, the first being, 'That labour and paines was not an evil, beyond the necessity wee have of enduring but life it self, and the greatest eas of it is actuall paine'.¹⁷⁵ His reason for holding to that principle is that pain, 'takes off the tedium of life, which compensates and overpays all the trouble of it, and then with the eas and refreshment that follows, it brings an actuall pleasure'.¹⁷⁶ This secular rationale for believing that 'life it self [...] is actuall paine' does not entirely dispel the similarity of that maxim to the religious principles of Baxter and Thornton, as well as those of Josselin, all of whom make accounts of their submission to a series of corrections meted out by God. North's second principle, also illustrative of his tendency to treat sickness with reason and frame his own suffering in the context of human behaviour, is that 'it is in all cases and circumstances, better to dy then to live. And that it is all weakness and infirmity that makes us desire to live'.¹⁷⁷ In another example of his habit of balancing principles and tallying their conclusions, he brings himself to accept that, 'This opinion frees us from the greatest solicitude of life, the vast care and passionate concerne of health which afflicts the most veget and athletick constitutions'.¹⁷⁸

North's desire to approach adversity with stoic reason rather than emotional frailty reflects his ambition to order the details of his life and express them clearly.

Psychology in Pain Management', *British Journal of Anaesthesia*, 87:1 (2001), 144-152, p.147.

¹⁷⁴ BL, MS. Add. 32506, f.142v.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, f.143r.

Early in *Notes of Me* he berates himself for his confusion and disorder of mind, remarking, 'I was ever pleased to be wrighting somewhat or other, and striving at method, and clearness, but could not attaine, so as to perfect any one designe'.¹⁷⁹ But, although reason was North's fallback in illness, it was not always easily deployed. In an early illness, he associated a weakened body with a disordered mind. 'It is easy to imagin that this great violence to nature weakened the facultys of the body, as well as of the mind; and the other supposed, this follows, for the mind cannot work without the action of the body, which are its immediate instruments'.¹⁸⁰ Prone to confusion and disorder as North might have been, in keeping his notes of himself, he was striving at 'method and clearness', and so he reaped mental benefits from this illness, claiming (in terms overtly borrowed from the practice of accounting), 'And for this happy temper, I esteem my self indetted to that sickness, and with it balance the account of other matters. For if I was weakened in my memory, and capacity of thinking, I was easd, of infinite cares, which others struggle with, and perhaps might have bin insuperable to me'.¹⁸¹ North ascribed what he saw as his lasting 'imperfect comand of thought' (evident in his propensity 'to talk and bable, and for want of true judgment [...] to dispute with others with an arrogance or opiniatrete')¹⁸² to this episode of sickness in his youth, and – although he grew into an adult who prided himself on stoic reasoning in adversity – he accounted it a blessing to have had his powers of reason and self-analysis weakened such that he was inoculated against becoming too dangerously entangled by the self-regarding 'cares, which others struggle with'.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, f.23v.

¹⁸⁰ BL, MS. Add. 32506, f.24v.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, f.25r.

¹⁸² Ibid.

3.

LETTERS

In the previous two chapters, a picture has emerged of self-writing that was, to a certain extent, prescribed by the theological systems from which it grew and the material texts into which it was written. Now, I turn to a new set of conventions. While diaries and memoirs present a store of information, methodically collected and transcribed, enabling self-scrutiny, analysis, diagnosis and justification, the selves written into familiar letters are defined in the context of their relationship to the letter's recipient. Much work has been done towards illuminating the ways in which early modern letters were able to register – in layout, handwriting conventions, styles of address, even in paper size – the relative social stations of correspondents, their degree of personal intimacy and, sometimes, the sensitivity of the letter's subject.¹ James Daybell writes that the 1635 reforms, making the royal post available for the transmission of private letters, 'altered the very nature of the early modern letter as the advent of a national system open to all meant that letter-writing was more secure, regularised and reliable'.² But, even so, many of the conventions that Daybell's work identifies in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, can still be seen – often in modified or less regimented forms – in the later part of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth. Two of the period's cultural developments that Daybell's work addresses have significance here. First is a developing concept of the

¹ James Daybell is the principal authority on these matters. Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

² Ibid, p.19.

personal letter as private, leading to an expansion in the uses to which letters were put: 'Business secrets were conveyed in writing personally; husbands and wives traded intimacies in correspondence; young girls were encouraged to practice their epistolary skills in order to allow them greater control over their own affairs in later life; clandestine or highly sensitive information was transmitted using ciphers, informal codes and secret devices'.³ Second was an increasingly complex didactic theory of letter writing, conveyed principally through printed letter-writing manuals. 'The seventeenth century in particular witnessed a series of generic developments: the rise of the 'secretary', a form aimed at the 'unschooled'; the emergence of 'newly discovered' letters, collections for amusement purporting to contain 'private' correspondence; and publication of manuals specifically aimed at women'.⁴ The emerging trends are of letter-writing becoming at once more personal, as the postal reforms encouraged easy correspondence between distant friends, spouses and lovers, and, theoretically at least, more formal, as manuals professing to teach the protocols of letter-writing abounded.⁵

What were the material conventions of seventeenth-century letter writing? Those with which this chapter is chiefly concerned relate to paper size, folding, the use of significant space and handwriting. Paper size had a direct correlation with social standing. Antoine de Courtin's conduct book, *The Rules of Civility* (1671), recommends, 'To make use of large paper, rather than small, and a whole sheet (though we write but six lines in the first page) rather than half a one, is no inconsiderable piece of Ceremony, one showing reverence and esteem, the other

³ Ibid, p.20.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Angel Day, *The English Secretary* (London: Short, 1599), John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius* (London: Mann, 1612), Thomas Blount, *The Academie of Eloquence* (London: Moseley, 1654), and Antoine de Courtin, *The Rules of Civility* (London: Martyn, 1671).

familiarity or indifference'.⁶ Several of this chapter's subjects had the habit of writing letters on folio-sized sheets no matter what the intended contents, though others did not observe the practice. As Daybell points out, paper size registered various factors 'including social status, gender, function, and economy':⁷ on the final point, paper was expensive and, once the post was opened to private users, charges were levied according to both a letter's size and the distance it travelled.⁸

Folding practices are related to paper size. There were several methods of folding the pages of a letter to produce a readable text that could be easily condensed into a small, sealed package. The favoured method during the seventeenth century appears to have been to fold the sheet into a bifolium of four pages, with the letter often begun on the inside recto page (A2r). When the space on that page ran out, the paper was turned through ninety degrees anticlockwise and, with the page reoriented, the text continued in the left-hand margin, running onto the bifolium's inside verso page. Variations on this practice were many, and some letters were written onto small enough sheets that no folding was required. In cases where folding was necessary, privacy may have been a consideration: the page might need to be arranged in such a way that, when the letter was folded into a package for sealing and sending, none of its text would be visible on the outside.⁹

Related to habits of folding and writing into the margins are a more clearly defined set of conventions concerned with 'significant space'.¹⁰ The term refers to the

⁶ De Courtin, *Rules of Civility*, p.136.

⁷ Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, p.100.

⁸ John Bidwell, 'French Paper in English Books', in John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 538-601, p.587 estimates, in the case of a printing house, paper might represent half of the production costs. For postal charges, see Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, p.100.

⁹ Henry Oldenburg concluded a letter to Boyle with the remark, 'I see, I have no more paper left, than is necessary for folding up this letter'. Royal Society, EL/OB, f.32.

¹⁰ See Jonathan Gibson, 'Significant Space in Manuscript Letters', *The Seventeenth Century*, 12:1 (1997), 1-10.

practice of using the blank spaces of a manuscript page to convey social meaning. Signing a letter low on the page, for instance, conveyed deference to a social superior, while a high signature indicated a letter from a social better to an inferior. The use of significant space is prescribed in several letter-writing manuals. Angel Day advises that, 'writing to any person of account, by howe much the more excellent hee is in calling from him in whose behalfe the Letter is framed, by so much the lower, shall the sub-scription thereunto belonging, in any wise be placed'. Indeed, Day explained, 'if the state of honour of him to whome the Letters shall be directed doe require so much, the verie lowest margent of paper shall do no more but beare it, so be it the space bee seemelie for the name, and the roome faire inough to comprehend it'.¹¹ Writing to his incandescent father in law, George More, and to Thomas Egerton, from Fleet prison, Donne often crammed his signature into the lower corners of his pages, sometimes leaving a gap of more than 10cm between his letter text and signature.¹²

Finally, of the main aspects of material letters that this chapter will consider, comes handwriting, through which correspondents were able to convey degrees of formality or informality, intimacy or distance. Having a letter taken by a secretary or scribe, for instance indicated a much different epistolary relationship than a letter in the sender's autograph. Writing to Francis Walsingham, Henry Sidney asked that his addressee hold him 'excused, that I answer not the same with my own Hand', his reasons being partly 'Urgency of Busynes' and partly infirmity: 'besides myne owne illegible Lettres and staggering Hand, wherein I finde soche Infirmitie, in the Weeldinge of my Pen, as it is very painefull for me to write'.¹³ A less deferential

¹¹ Day (1599), p.15.

¹² For examples of these signing practices, see Folger Shakespeare Library, L.b.528 and L.b.530.

¹³ Arthur Collins, ed., *Letters and Memorials of State in the Reigns of Queen Mary Queen Elizabeth King James* (London: Osborne, 1746), p.156.

apology, written to Boyle, came from Dawbeney Turbeville who begged, 'pray pardon the erratas and false orthography being it was written oute by a boy, and not examined by mee haveing such hast at the writinge; I protest I had noe more time then the folding up of it'.¹⁴ At the other end of the scale, some letter writers felt that familiarity with one another's hands bred intimacy between correspondents: in 1661, shortly after striking up an epistolary relationship, Robert Moray wrote to Boyle, 'Now that we know one anothers hands, let me write, sans façon'.¹⁵ And different types of script conveyed different social meanings. Edward Cocker identified italic as 'generally written by Scholars and most Gentlemen; it is commonly used by Merchants and of excellent use for Women, which they may imitate with facility and write with dexterity'.¹⁶ Differences in the rendering of a hand, as Daybell says, contained implicit meanings. 'It was perfectly acceptable for noblemen and noblewomen to write with scrawling, almost illegible hands, a mark of aristocratic reserve'.¹⁷

Other aspects of material epistolarity – sealing conventions, evidence concerning carriers, postal conditions, delivery times and so on – will also come into these discussions. In this chapter, I will consider the use of these conventions, in conjunction with the rhetoric of self-scrutiny and self-presentation, for defining the relationship between letter writer and recipient at times of the writer's illness. Often sickness enforced separation and necessitated letter writing. Gary Schneider, examining the rhetoric of bodily presence in early modern letters, concludes, 'In the insistent metaphors of physical presence and orality lies the faith that letters

¹⁴ Royal Society, RB/3/5, f.147.

¹⁵ Royal Society, RB/3/7, f.18.

¹⁶ Edward Cocker, *The Guide to Pen-man-ship*, 2 vols. (London: Ruddiard, 1673), I, p.8.

¹⁷ Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, p.89.

accomplish the same social work that face-to-face contact does'.¹⁸ Significantly, says Schneider, 'Such a desire is embraced by both the writers and the recipients of letters, so that faith in the letter's representational capacities is often transmuted into a persuasive and determined fantasy of oral/aural intercourse and bodily presence'.¹⁹ This illusion of mutual presence could be bolstered with reference to the material letter. In an example that Schneider quotes, Henry Oxinden, writing to Thomas Peyton, attempted to allay anxieties that, having been ill at the time of writing, he might communicate the infection through his letter: 'But least perhaps you may thinke there may bee some danger in my paiper (as I beeleave there is in my person) I will assure you I have so aired itt by the fire therby to exhale all infectious moisture from itt, that unlesse the breath of Heaven have purposely since infected itt, itt cannot anie wayes pollute your faire hands, which to my thinking itt shoulde rather desire to kisse then hurt'.²⁰ Oxinden's example expresses a courtesy in drawing attention to the trouble he has taken to preserve his friend from the danger of infection.²¹ Donne produces a similar effect, remarking on the pains he was put to in order to produce a letter to Henry Goodyer, claiming 'This letter hath more merit, then one of more diligence, for I wrote it in my bed, and with much pain'.²² In this example, though the material letter takes a less central role, Donne is also able to foster intimacy with his correspondent by drawing his attention to the physical circumstances of the letter's composition.

¹⁸ Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005), p.113.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.111.

²⁰ Dorothy Gardiner, ed., *The Oxinden and Peyton Letters, 1642-1670* (London: Sheldon, 1937), pp.85-86.

²¹ Alice Thornton might have been more careful when communicating with her brother who, after contracting smallpox, had been sent into isolation: Thornton wrote letters to him, 'tyeing them about a little dogs neck wch beeing taken into his bed, brought ye infection of ye disease uppon my selfe'. BL, MS. Add. 88897/1, p.71.

²² John Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*, p.31.

I will examine two principle strands of letter-writing. The first part of the chapter will attend to letters describing illness exchanged by correspondents with an intimate or familial relationship to one another. In this context, I will consider letters circulating in the Twysden family, those of Boyle to his sister Katherine Jones, Viscountess Ranelagh, the correspondence of Anne Conway and Henry More, and Donne's letters, written in his final years, to Anne Cockayne. In the second part of the chapter, I will consider the letters written by patients to physicians seeking medical advice, and the epistolary relationship between such correspondents. I will present evidence from the letters of the botanist Edward Lhwyd to the physician and naturalist Martin Lister, the letters of the Rotterdam merchant Benjamin Furly to John Locke, and Milton's letter to the Greek scholar Leonard Philaras.

I.

THE TWYSDEN PAPERS

The main claim of this first section is that, at times of illness, writers of familiar letters often sought refuge in familial or intimate epistolary communities. The papers of the Twysden family – into which Isabella Saunder married in 1635 (becoming Isabella Twysden, author of the almanac diary I mentioned in Chapter 1) provide an example of that. Multiple volumes of correspondence, notebooks and estate papers, covering several generations of the Twysden family, survive.²³ At the centre of much of the correspondence is Isabella's husband, Roger Twysden, the antiquary who, in 1629, inherited the baronetcy created in 1611 for his father William.²⁴ At William Twysden's death, Roger took over as patriarch, beginning a new ledger in which to

²³ See BL MS. Add. 34147-34178, Kent History and Library Centre. NRA 3509 Kent AO misc and NRA 4544 Twysden, and Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Kent c. 11-12, d 5.

²⁴ George Cokayne, ed., *Complete Baronetage, Volume I: 1611-1625* (Exeter: Pollard, 1900), p.75.

inscribe information about business transactions connected with the family's estates. Three such volumes survive, the most interesting of which is British Library MS. Add. 34163, a tall, slim volume, kept between 1629 and 1663, containing a good deal more than merely business information. Like Heywood's notebooks, it appears to function as a register of family occasions: the death of each of his parents and his wife is marked by a biographical sketch along with detailed information about their funeral costs. Lists appear of the family's assets, creditors and debtors, and numbers of servants, as well as descriptions of legal disputes threatening family property. Twysden is clearly working alongside a number of source texts kept by his ancestors. One page of accounts is headed, 'Quitrents payd out of my Land Ano. 1630 according to my grandfathers booke wth my own obseruations Roger Twysden'.²⁵

The volume's contents suggest that the Twysden family was accustomed to regarding itself as a single unit whose financial codependence gave it coherence.²⁶ The tendency for financial accounting to merge into life-writing that was prevalent in diary-keeping is, therefore, also discernible in this family's correspondence. And it was seen in connection with illness as well. Two letters from Roger Twysden's mother, Anne, to his father, William, shift with great facility between domestic economy and personal illness. One prefaces a description of a domestic stocktake with an apologetic remark, playing down the importance of accounting matters, Anne Twysden writing, 'ye ordering of the poore howssowld expens there I thinke scars deserves thy trobell'.²⁷ That business concluded, she to moves another matter of domestic economy, upbraiding her husband for having miscalculated the potential

²⁵ BL, MS. Add. 34163, f.37r.

²⁶ The Twysden family's sense of collective identity is further testified to by a document in BL, MS. Add. 34174, entitled 'The Genealogie of the Antient family of the Twisdens' which traces the line of inheritance from the age of Edward I to Roger Twysden's grandchildren.

²⁷ BL, MS. Add. 34173, f.11r.

value of the family's rye ('we haue lost more then in yt we saue, by not selling owr ry when ye prise was hy').²⁸ Eventually, she comes to the matter of health:

I am not wors, nor I thinke better, I haue now outward slaps as well as inward, Mr Fox is now resolued all my bignes is ye spleene, & to cure yt ar his derictions & my hopeles pane, & yet sweethart if thow beest wthoute reson loth to loose me, be not trobled att it for I may last thus a goodwhile, & ye end will be a consumtione, wch of all deaths if it plese him who ever doth to his wt is best I wowld chuse, my phisick in ye mene time is not very changiabell, for I very seldom se ye doctor, & his trash is I am sure of small vallev, truly by ye mannor of his describing wt I feele I thinke as he doth ye splene a grete part of my infirmity, or if it be not I dare say he knows not wt it is²⁹

Some of the vocabulary of domestic accounting is carried from the early part of the letter into this description of Anne Twysden's apparently grave illness; her condition is described as a matter of balance: 'not wors, nor I thinke better' / 'outward slaps as well as inward'. Her doctor's interventions had 'small vallev'. The details Twysden gives are designed to convey information economically. Effects are attributed to causes. Where her claims are based in opinion or conjecture, she attributes them: 'Mr Fox is now resolued all my bignes is ye spleene'. And, as in the cases of many diaries that deployed accounting practices, her assessment of her physical state is accompanied by an assessment of her spiritual condition, also analysed in almost measurable terms: Twysden's sickness has made the end of her life 'wch euer had a serten apoyneted distans', 'more visibell',³⁰ and she is therefore able to calculate that she still has left a 'good while' to enjoy the mutual comforts of marriage, while being reassured that she will not 'be long seuerd from eternall hapines'.³¹

As a reflection of the spousal relationship, this letter appears to bear more signs of news reporting and domestic accounting than of personal revelation and self-

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, ff.11r-v.

exploration. Its layout bespeaks intimacy in as much as it does not deploy the traits of significant space, superfluous paper or careful handwriting that might characterise formal or business letters. Mostly, it prioritises the conveyance of information above the observance of epistolary niceties. Its layout suggests a need to convey information as far as the size of the pages allowed. The letter is a half-folio sheet folded into a bifolium, with the text beginning on the inside recto page and flowing (with the page reorientated by ninety degrees) onto the inside verso and continuing onto the outer pages, which are filled completely by text. It is a letter designed to convey information in a number of essential areas of which Anne Twysden's health is merely one.

The point may be supported by contrasting this letter with one from Anne Wharton to her husband, Thomas, written in 1681 from Paris, where Anne was receiving treatment for the mysterious illness that would see her dead by the age of twenty-six. Wharton's observance of convention is slightly more evident than Twysden's, though by no means rigid. Her letter appears on a slightly smaller sheet, with the date written hard against the page's upper margin and a 2cm gap between that and the text. At the end of the letter there is a 1cm gap between the text and the subscription, while the signature is written in much larger characters than the rest of the letter. Alone, these details have minor significance, but they imply at least that Wharton's short letter is more concerned with its appearance than Twysden's. Wharton's text is the more rhetorically calculated. Like Twysden, Wharton reports the severity of her illness such that she is close to death:

Forgiue me for giueing you ye troble of a letter euery post, but I am indeed grown so fond a foole that I can't help it; in a fitt, I almost beat my branes out against ye pauements & found ye want of bords, for a litle more & it

had eased you of ye inconvienience of a wife.³²

The broad context of the exchange of letters is that Wharton's mysterious illness is suspected to have been a venereal disease, perhaps contracted through a sexual relationship with her uncle, the poet Rochester.³³ Some have speculated that Thomas Wharton knew, if not of the affair then at least the cause of her illness, and that the two had reached an agreement which, in spite of Thomas's own philandering, saw Anne will her substantial fortune to him.³⁴ The local context is that Thomas, recently re-elected as MP for Buckinghamshire, had returned to England to begin a new parliamentary session and was demanding that Anne leave off her French treatment and return to join him.³⁵ In this light, Wharton's need to impress her mortal danger upon her husband has particular urgency.³⁶ So desperate are her fits that she almost beats her 'branes out against ye pauements': Thomas has come closer than he may realise to being eased 'of ye inconvienience of a wife'. Anne Twysden's occasional payments of lip service to her husband's emotional response to the news of her

³² BL, MS. Add. 4162, f.232r. 'Want of bords': Wharton perhaps uses the term 'bords' in the sense 'jest' [Coles (1676)], or, as Cotgrave translated the French, *bourder*, 'To toy, trifle, dally; bourd, or ieast with' (Cotgrave, *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*). The term's more conventional spelling was "bourds".

³³ Her brother-in-law, Goodwin Wharton, wrote of Anne, in his unpublished autobiography, that 'since I am comanded to give a full caracter of her; I must say that she was att first debauched for mony by my Lord Peterborough, whilst mighty young, then layn long by her own unkle Lord Rochester: and then in ye very heate of my businesse she did not however resist ye addres of Jack How which continued some small time only. BL, MS. Add, 20006, f.154r.

³⁴ *The Surviving Works of Anne Wharton*, ed. G. Greer and S. Hastings (Stump Cross: Stump Cross Books, 1997), pp.101-104 gives an account of Wharton's relationship to her husband, offering various theories about her reasons for unexpectedly willing her substantial fortune to him. The possibility of foul play by Thomas Wharton has been raised: in 1689, one court satirist wrote 'T. Wharton is to have her maidenhead, / And if not sound, the dowry's forfeited. / If he to gain the sum should pox her now, / And swear before the judge he found her so, / The mother would (if she were him) all know'. John Harold Wilson, *Court Satires of the Restoration* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1976), pp.220-221.

³⁵ In a letter that May, Wharton pleaded with her husband to allow her to stay in France, insisting in one, 'since I am not yet perfectly recouered ye cold of ye winter will force me to relaps in eny place less warm than that to which I design to goe'. Wharton, *Surviving Works*, 'Introduction', p.73. Thomas Wharton's return to England was noted in a letter from William Taylor to Lord Wharton of 19 March 1681. Ibid, p.67.

³⁶ The severity of her illness is testified to in a letter from John Cary to Sir Ralph Verney of 1680, in which he admits to being 'much afraid she would haue died'. Wharton *Surviving Works*, 'Introduction', p.66.

illness, by contrast, seem very slight departures from her business-like, informative mode.

The Twysdens' habit of sharing domestic, financial information passed into the next generation. Anne and William's third son, also called William Twysden – who died of rickets in 1641 aged thirty-six – spent his final months in medicinal retreat at Bath,³⁷ from where he sent a letter to Roger, his elder brother, and one to Isabella Twysden. The letters are of an identical size and form, each written on a half-folio sheet folded into two. They appear to have been folded together into a single packet and delivered by the family servant Mr Johannes, who had been loaned to William to attend him at Bath. Because the letters were carried by a known and trusted bearer, there was no need for sealing, and the family clearly felt comfortable conveying personal and financial information through Johannes.³⁸ Part of the letter to Roger Twysden (which thanks him for the loan of Johannes's services) concerns the matter of personal expense entailed by William's illness:

Concerning my selfe hee can tell you all, so that I neede say nothing, but this in short, that if ever I recover it must bee here, which hath made me now take a chamber by the yeere, & settle my selfe in a way of living in so deare a place as cheape as I can resolving to waite here the good leasure of him who hath laid this burden upon mee, & I hope will make me able to beare it what I shall bee able to save yeerely towards the payment of my debts is now my greatest care. I must bee at certaine charge 7 a yeere. for my chamber, 4 or 5 to a Bath guide, & 6 my mans wages: without a man in this infirme state I can not live.³⁹

Johannes is so integral a part of the family network that he conveys additional meanings not written into the letter. It will fall to him to give Roger a full account of

³⁷ See *Alum. Cant.*, IV, p.281, and BL, MS. Add. 34173, f.22r. William Twysden (1605–1641) is buried in Bath Abbey.

³⁸ Before her marriage to Roger, Isabella Twysden (née Saunder) wrote to Johannes with instructions for sending a member of the Peckham household staff to attend Elizabeth Twysden in Yorkshire, who had recently given birth to a daughter. She signed the letter 'your very loving friend Isabella Saunder'. BL, MS. Add. 34173, f.13r.

³⁹ BL, MS. Add. 34173, f.23r.

William's health, with William confining himself to essential facts. Like Wharton writing from Paris, he is convinced that his survival depends on his being supported in his current place. His decision, then, to take a room on a yearly lease represents both a financial and a medical choice: after a cost-benefit analysis of the value of living in Bath, he reasons that, while it is necessary to his survival, it must be done 'as cheape as I can'. Conventional expressions of submission to God's will and hopes for patience in affliction follow, but William gives his priorities quite clearly. His mother gave her domestic finances and state of health roughly equal weight, but William announces, 'what I shall bee able to save yeerely towards the payment of my debts is now my greatest care'. The argument connecting identity to financial solvency finds a clear example in this letter: William, being in debt and close to death, is required to take action to lessen the deficit he has caused to the family economy.

BOYLE'S LETTERS TO KATHERINE JONES

The Twysdens observed several conventions prescribed by their sense of collective family identity and co-dependency. Letters between Boyle and his sister Katherine Jones, Viscountess Ranelagh (with whom he enjoyed a closer relationship than with any of his other siblings) display a different type of epistolary relationship, at times (particularly times of illness) characterised by their familial connection, at others (often times of health) characterised by their shared involvement in philosophical communities. Stephen Shapin has demonstrated Boyle's construction of a public identity appropriate to the practice of natural philosophy, and his search, in that endeavour, for an ideal balance of pious and gentlemanly conduct. Recent work on

Jones, meanwhile, has established her as a participating member of seventeenth-century circles of philosophical correspondents, especially the Hartlib circle.⁴⁰ Here I will give particular emphasis to two letters written by Boyle to Jones from his Stalbridge estate in the early 1640s, during which time, Shapin says, Boyle 'worked away on a series of moral and theological essays, developed networks of charitable and religious patronage, spent time in a chemical laboratory he had built in Stalbridge, and continued to lay in a disorganized stock of utilitarian knowledge with special attention to a considerable English natural- and moral-philosophical identity without having as yet published anything'.⁴¹ By the end of that period, writes Shapin, 'The triple conjunction of birth and wealth, learning, and piety that had been so long recommended by Christian humanist writers was now taken to be exemplified in the remarkable person of the Honourable Robert Boyle'.⁴²

I want to analyse Boyle's varying uses of the conventions of familial and philosophical letter-writing for describing his health to Jones. With him the inheritor of a Dorset estate, and her comfortably married with a dowry of £4000,⁴³ Boyle and Jones were not tied by financial dependence, and consequently their letters are less concerned with matters of domestic economy than the Twysdens'. But that is not to claim their correspondence is without protocol. In 1648, Boyle opened a letter to

⁴⁰ See Carol Pal, *Republic of Women: Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) and Michelle Di Meo, *Katherine Jones, Lady Ranelagh (1615-91): Science and Medicine in a Seventeenth-Century Englishwoman's Writing* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Warwick, 2007). Pal demonstrates Jones's self-presentation as a member of the Hartlib circle (which, crucially she joined as a known participant in a group of Irish natural philosophers). Di Meo – collating references to Jones in the Hartlib correspondence – shows that she was accepted by the circles' wider membership. Di Meo draws attention to Jones's relationship with and influence on Henry Oldenburg and John Beale. Both she and Pal emphasise Jones's aspirations for political reform (both educational reform and reform of Ireland) as significant aspects of her philosophical outlook.

⁴¹ Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), p.143.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ In a letter to the steward of his estate of 1644, Boyle wrote 'the manor of Stalbridge were, by my father's decease, descended unto me, yet it was near four months before I could get thither'. Boyle, *Corresp.*, I, p.26. Jones's dowry is described in Alex. B. Grosart, *The Lismore Papers of Richard Boyle, First and "Great" Earl of Cork*, 5 vols. (London: Chiswick, 1886), IV, pp.60-61.

Jones with the following self-deprecating pleasantries:

If I were of those Scribler's humor, who love to put themselves to one Trouble to put their Freinds to another; & who weekly breake their Silence only to acquaint us with their unwillingnesse to keepe it; I must confesse I had much oftner written You, Letters not worth the Reading. But having ever look't upon Silence & Respect as things as neere of Kinne as Importunity & Affection, I elected rather to trust Your Good Opinion to Your Good-nature, then Your Patience with my Letters: for which to suppose a Welcome must have Presum'd a greater Kindnesse then they could have Express't.⁴⁴

This, perhaps, is an elaborate apology for an intermission in his writing to Jones, but Boyle's desire to restrict his letters to his sister to matters of importance is significant. Usually, letter-writing to Boyle was a matter of business transacted factually. In the same letter, he remarked, 'I thought it pardonabler to say Nothing by a respectuous Silence then by Idle Words'.⁴⁵ Having removed himself to Stalbridge, Boyle says he has 'growne soe perfect a Villager', living 'soe remov'd, not onely from the Roades, but from the very By-pathes of Intelligence that to entertaine You with our Countrey-Discourse would have extreamely puzzled mee, since Your Children have not the Ricketts nor the Measles'.⁴⁶ Though the letter does not address his health, he hints at its being mildly disordered ('as for Newes, I could not have sent You so much as that of my being Well').⁴⁷ Normally, Boyle disapproved of prolixity or frivolity in letters but, when his good health began to waver, he departed from his usual restraint, indulging the 'Scribler's humor' to foster conversational, familial communication at the expense of professional discourse.

Jones was privileged to receive such a letter. At times of Boyle's more serious illnesses, others found their correspondence curtailed altogether. In 1691, he wrote to James Kirkwood, apologising for his delay in responding to one of Kirkwood's

⁴⁴ Royal Society, RB/3/1, f. 103

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

letters, but pleading,

it pleased God to afflict me with a Distemper, which, tho his Goodness made very supportable to me; yet it has made me so weake and tender, that I have not stirr'd out of the House these two moneths: Dureing which time I was indisposd to keep a Literary Correspondence, even with my near Relations whereto I must add, that dureing a good part of the time, your Letter was unhappily mislaid⁴⁸

Familial letters, then, were an inevitable by-product of illness. But necessity imposed restrictions on the members of his circle with whom Boyle could 'keep a Literary Correspondence' when ill. In his weakness and confinement, he limited himself to correspondence with 'near Relations'. And, even in these cases, what he could write was closely restricted. Returning to his dislike of 'Idle Words', Boyle apologised to Jones for another failure to reply to one of her letters, arguing that, even if he had responded to all her correspondence, he would still be in her debt because, 'tis in the Productions of the Mind, that the Quality ought to measure extent and assigne number'. He would be willing to offer proof of the argument, were it not that he knew Jones would not wish him to endanger his health by doing so: 'I cud easily evince this truth, & the justnesse of the Application too, did I not apprehend, that your Modesty would make You mind mee, that the Nature of my Disease forbids all Straynes'.⁴⁹

Jones's responses do not survive. These examples suggest a relationship between Boyle and his sister that acknowledged a set of epistolary protocols which Boyle chose to breach or observe according to the state of his health.⁵⁰ His letter to

⁴⁸ Ibid, f.132.

⁴⁹ Ibid, f. 120.

⁵⁰ Jones's letters to Boyle demonstrate less willingness to play with letter-writing protocols. Her letters tend to prefer a plain style. Opening a letter to Boyle with an acknowledgment of receipt, for instance, Jones writes simply 'Yours which inclosed one to my brother Corke & another to Capt Whiteby Came to my hands by the last post'. Royal Society, RB/3/5, f.19. Plain style had been a hallmark of Humanist letter-writing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the seventeenth century it was advised by Thomas Blount, who allows slight leeway for philosophical letters: 'Now for Fashion, it consists in four qualities of your Style. The first is Brevity; For Letters must not be Treatises or discourses, except it be amongst learned men, and even amongst them there is a kind

Kirkwood, however, along with his non-epistolary writing, testifies to the importance he attached to his family relationships. Boyle's dedication of his *Occasional Reflections* to Jones (whom he addresses using the soubriquet 'Sophronia') offers further proof of his devotion to his sister. Having praised Jones's judgment, wit, eloquence and modesty, Boyle goes on to say that the 'Blessing of your Affection' for his work would be 'a Felicity, that I know You enough to value above all the Praises I can miss of: since Applause can make me happy but in other Mens Opinion, but Your Friendship can make me so in my own'.⁵¹

Boyle's relationship to his sister was not solely one of mutual admiration. It was to her that he turned, more in earnest, in August of 1649, suffering a severe illness that had taken him, like William Twysden eight years earlier, to Bath in search of treatment.⁵² Boyle's letter explains his epistolary silence, this time, as the result of his reluctance to seek comfort by complaining of his own afflictions to others (being, he said, 'to good a Friend to find a Satisf[action] in their Greefes I love, or to admitt of the Ill natur'd Consolation of seeing others wretched as well as I').⁵³ But his illness had reached such severity that, 'Since I wrote to you last I was unlikely enuf ever to be in a Condition to Write to You againe'.⁵⁴ Though the letter's main purpose was to put her off from visiting him, (which he said would 'not more certainly discompose Your Family, then twill be [useless] or unnecessary to me'),⁵⁵ another of Boyle's aims

of thrift and saving of words'. Blount (1654), p.142.

⁵¹ Boyle, (1665), sig.A6v.

⁵² A document containing some of the prescriptions that were administered to him is held at the Royal Society, RB/2/18, ff.101-102.

⁵³ Royal Society, RB/3/1, f.127. *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, a play by Boyle's elder brother Roger, first earl of Orrery, also expressed the notion that complaint in pain transfers grief to others: 'Easing your self, when you of grief complain, / To many others you transfer your pain'. (*The Tragdey of Mustapha* (London: Herringman, 1668), p.112). In a letter to Roger, Robert promised to keep his grief at his brother's persistent gout to himself: 'Whilst the sad news we received from Charleville forc'd me to suppose that you were yet in torment, I thought it much more seasonable to grieve & pray for you, than to trouble you with insignificant Papers'. Boyle, *Corresp.*, IV, p.229.

⁵⁴ Royal Society, RB/3/1, f.127.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, f.128.

was to recruit his sister's help in his affliction: 'I must implore the Assistance of Your fervent Prayers (Deare Sister) which I am confident will both find a shorter way to Heaven, & be better wellcom'd there'.⁵⁶ Although Boyle expresses his pious intention to submit to God's will, his letter recruits Jones to the intimate family practice of communal prayer (even if the act is performed in absentia).

The manuscript letter that survives is a scribal copy, but its internal evidence implies a degree of urgency in composition. Boyle's philosophical writing has begun to be discommoded by his illness, and he complains, 'now truly Weakenesse & the Doctor's Prescriptions have cast my Pen into the Fire'. But, 'in spite of their Menaces', he says, 'I sometimes presume to snatch it out a while, & blot some Paper with it'.⁵⁷ This practice of working during intermissions in his illness, Boyle says, has disfigured his handwriting; in his closing remarks, he begs, 'I hope you will pardon the Disorder of this scribble to that of the Writer, who is not onely weary of his Journey, but is at present troubled with the fit of his Ague'.⁵⁸ The departure from his usual hand might have alerted Jones to the intensity of Boyle's condition as well as the pains he had taken to produce the letter.

As Boyle began to find himself 'upon the mending hand',⁵⁹ the wit returned to his correspondence with Jones, and their epistolary relationship began to change. His letters became increasingly arch in bending protocol. Writing of having been visited at Bath by several persons 'whose Visitations (I thinke I may call them) in spite of my Aversenesse to Physicke, make mee find a greater Trouble in the Congratulations then the Instruments of my Recovery', Boyle quipped, 'You'l pardon, perhaps, the bitterness of this Expression, when I have told You, that having spent most of this

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid, f.127.

⁵⁸ Ibid, f.128.

⁵⁹ Ibid, f.120.

Weeke in drawing (for my particular use) a quintessence of Wormewood, those Disturbers of my Worke, might easily shake some few drops into my Inke'.⁶⁰ If his writing (professional and personal) is not impeded by physic, then it is by the inconvenience of well-wishers. The letter's closing remarks enact a dramatic change of mode in which Boyle switches from ailing brother to working philosopher:

But my Bloud has soe thickn'd my Inke, that I cannot yet make it runne, & my thoughts of Improving the Creatures, have bin very much displac't by those of Leaving them. Nor has my Disease bin more guilty of my Oblivion then my Employment since it has begun to release mee. for Vulcan has so transported and bewitch'd mee, that as the Delights I tast in it, make me fancy my Laboratory a kind of Elizium; so as if the Threshold of it possest the quality the Poets ascrib'd to that Lethe their Fictions made men taste of before their Entrance into those seates of Blisse;⁶¹

Boyle's ill blood had brought about an effectual clotting of his ink; the work exploring 'the Theologicall Use of Naturall Philosophy' that he had promised his sister would not be forthcoming as promptly as he had hoped.⁶² The remainder of the passage, in which Boyle expresses enthusiasm for alchemical research, is frequently quoted (cut away from the previous sentence) to exemplify his sudden turn to laboratory work: his 'almost palpable excitement'⁶³ at 'a new and exhilarating experience',⁶⁴ an expression of 'how blissfully happy retreat into his Stalbridge laboratory made him'.⁶⁵ Surely, these observations are correct, but they tend to overlook the contextual nuance that this excitement is expressed as part of an explanation to his sister for his omitting adequately to hold up his end of an

⁶⁰ Ibid, f.120.

⁶¹ Ibid, f.121.

⁶² Ibid. The work to which he refers is 'Of the Study of the Booke of Nature'. Royal Society, RB/1/8/14. His 'thoughts of Improving the Creatures' refer to his didactic intention by practicing natural philosophy to improve mankind and glorify God. As he phrases it in this same letter, 'endeavouring to make the Contemplation of the Creatures contributory to the Instruction of the Prince, & to the Glory of the Author of them'.

⁶³ Michael Hunter, *Robert Boyle Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.99.

⁶⁴ Hunter, *Robert Boyle, 1627-91*, p.25.

⁶⁵ Shapin, *Social History of Truth*, p.173.

epistolary relationship, and that, as justifications of that neglect, his 'Disease' and his 'Employment' are given equal standing. The difference is that, where disease impeded his letter-writing and, at times of particular desperation, necessitated it, laboratory work offers a practical distraction that leaves no time for familiar correspondence. The two modes frequently blur with one another, but it is possible to detect Boyle sometimes addressing Jones as a sibling transmitting family news and seeking comfort and spiritual support, while, at other times, she is consulted as an interested party in his philosophical work and a participating member of the Republic of Letters. Here, Boyle's style of address appears to straddle professional and familiar epistolary modes. He does not write frivolously, out of his 'Scribler's humor', but he does write figuratively, invoking the images of himself at work transported by Vulcan (the patron of alchemy) and his laboratory as Elysium (the afterlife of the virtuous), whose threshold put him into a hypnotic trance (as the river Lethe did to those who travelled it).⁶⁶ Boyle was not accustomed to such analogical writing: nowhere else in his letters does he mention Elysium or Lethe, and he makes only two other mentions of Vulcan, one of those in another letter to Jones. He was not always so florid in his descriptions of his work: one letter to Jones reports, that 'My Ethics go very slowly on', the only other business with which he is concerned, he says, being 'to make my brother's sixty trees bear him some golden fruit'.⁶⁷ Illness and recovery appear to be among the criteria according to which he judged in which mode to engage her.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ The association of Vulcan with alchemy has been attributed to Paracelsus, whose *Hermetic and Alchemical Writings*, in its 1894 translation, gives, 'God created iron, but not in the form it should afterwards assume; not as a horse-shoe, a sickle, or a sword. These modifications are entrusted to Vulcan, and so this Art is good'. *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, Called Paracelsus the Great*, trans. Arthur Edward Waite, 2 vols. (London: Elliott, 1894), II, p.166.

⁶⁷ Boyle, *Corresp.*, I, p.34.

⁶⁸ See Boyle's letter to Katherine Jones of 16 March 1647 (Boyle, *Corresp.*, I, p.50) and his letter to

ANNE CONWAY

Anne Conway's exchange of letters with her friend and mentor Henry More constituted a similar epistolary community. Conway and More participated in a sustained philosophical correspondence, dominated by her mysterious illness, the circumstances of which are worth rehearsing. In 1672, seven years before Conway's death at forty-seven, Thomas Willis gave a description of her case (quoted here in its 1683 English translation):

Growing well of a Feavour before she was twelve years old, she became obnoxious to pains in the Head, which were wont to arise, sometimes of their own accord, and more often upon every light occasion. The sickness being limited to no one place of the Head, troubled her sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, and often thorow the whole compass of the Head. During the fit (which rarely ended under a day and a nights space, and often held for two, three, or four days) she was impatient of light, speaking, noise, or of any motion, sitting upright in her Bed, the Chamber made dark, she would talk to no body, nor take any sleep, or sustenance. At length, about the declination of the fit, she was wont to lye down with an heavy and disturbed sleep, from which awaking she found her self better, and so by degrees grew well, and continued indifferently well till the time of the intermission.⁶⁹

The fits were clearly painful and persistent. Although Willis notes that her headaches began from the age of twelve, the earliest evidence of symptoms in Conway's correspondence comes in 1652 (her twenty first year), when her brother, John Finch, wrote to her, 'I am exceeding sorry to heare that your Rheume is not quite vanquish'd yet'.⁷⁰ Finch's Galenic warning was that Conway should not overcool herself,

Benjamin Worsley of 1 March 1647. Boyle, *Corresp.*, I, pp.47–49.

⁶⁹ Thomas Willis, *Two Discourses Concerning the Soul of Brutes*, trans. Samuel Pordage (London: Dring, 1683), pp.121–122.

⁷⁰ BL, MS. Add. 23215, f.5r. More's letters to Conway along with those of her brother, John Finch, are held in the British Library. Some of her husband's letters are also in the British Library, with others surviving only in print. Anne Conway's letters are divided between the British Library, Christ's College, Cambridge, the Huntington Library and the Library of the Religious Society of Friends. With one exception, all are printed in Marjorie Hope Nicolson, ed., *The Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and Their Friends, 1642–1684* rev. ed. Sarah Hutton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). For letters not surviving in manuscript, those held outside the UK, and those in the Library of the Religious Society of Friends (which is to

advising his sister 'to take perpetuall cool thinges is to cure not your disease but to disturb your temper which to preserve in its first constitution is to restore you to your health but in regard you have been accustomed to an ill diet and custome is a second nature doe not alter your old course on a suddain but gently by degrees wean your selfe from too many cool things, for if you make a violent change I am afraid of some Feavour or disease'.⁷¹ The same year, Conway's husband, Edward, earl of Conway, noted in a letter that 'she hath been in Phisick this 12 month, for the violentest paine in the head, that any one in the world was ever troubled with, and so frequently it comes upon her that no humane strength seemes to me able to beare it'.⁷² The next two decades' correspondence is littered with similar remarks. By 1670, Conway was receiving treatment from Francis Mercury Van Helmont, though to seemingly little effect. Edward Conway reported, 'All I can say of Van Helmont's success with my wife is, that she hath gained upon him so far, as that he will do for her all that is in his power; he hath sent into Germany for medicines for her and will return to her as soon as his business will permit, and my stay here is only for him, and to carry him down with me'.⁷³ Conway's health declined sharply in the last decade of her life and, in 1672, she became so ill that, for a period, More was forced to write to her companion Elizabeth Foxcroft for information about her condition. In her final years, Conway was almost permanently bedridden, reporting, even five years before her death, 'I have not been able to have had my bed made for above these three monthes'.⁷⁴

date uncatalogued), I will give page references to *The Conway Letters*.

⁷¹ Ibid, f.5v.

⁷² Huntingdon Library, San Marino, California, HA 14355. The letter does not figure in *The Conway Letters*, but is quoted in Sarah Hutton, *Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.30.

⁷³ *Conway Letters*, p.326.

⁷⁴ BL, MS. Add. 23214, f.40r.

Her pain being so severe and unremitting, an important purpose of Conway's letters was to seek effective medical relief. The surviving letters, however, do not show her contacting physicians for diagnosis (a common practice that I will discuss later in this chapter), but rather using her network of known correspondents as surrogates for herself in seeking treatments and cures. Hearing from her doctor that Boyle recommended *ens veneris* as a treatment for headache, Conway wrote to her husband, asking him to seek out the Oxford philosopher and procure the remedy. She was keen that instruction should be had directly from Boyle, advising, 'if you have an opportunity of discoursing with himself he is best able to give an account of the effects of his owne medison, and it being easie to take I am willing to make tryall of it'.⁷⁵

Nor were the treatments she considered solely medical. A letter from More of 1654 reveals that she sought his opinion of the faith healer Matthew Coker, sending two pamphlets authored by Coker for him to review. More's response was that Coker had 'done much more for the gaining of a beliefe, that he is inspired indeed, or that he is a prophet, then any of the Enthusiasts of this present age'.⁷⁶ Ultimately, he believed that, although Coker's methods seemed to be effective, they were not produced by inspiration, 'but by a power partly naturall and partly devotionall, and that it does not at all amount to a miracle'.⁷⁷

Conway's health so exercised More that he actively researched medical developments and contacted physicians on her behalf. She was, therefore, forced to concede a measure of self-determination, frequently turning over concerns for her health to external parties who searched widely for remedies. In 1653, after a visit to

⁷⁵ Ibid, f.25r.

⁷⁶ BL, MS. Add. 23216, f.12r.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

her Kensington home, during which More had found Conway incapacitated, he wrote to her 'It being my hap to finde you so ill of the headache as I did when I was last at Kensington, it left so strong impression in my minde, that I could not omitt any opportunity of enquiring after a Remedy'.⁷⁸ And so he contacted the London physician Luke Ridgley, who became Conway's physician for a period, though with little success.

More was determined, and recommended that Conway consult the chemist Frederick Clodius, a friend and correspondent of Boyle's and the son in law of Samuel Hartlib. Clodius appears to have prescribed mercury, leaving Conway dangerously ill and More disheartened.⁷⁹ The failure weighed heavily on More and, after another abortive attempt at recommending a chemical therapy, he announced that he had 'no courage at all left in me any way to intermeddle in that matter els'.⁸⁰

Of course, he continued to 'intermeddle' as he always had, recommending, in the same letter, 'one in Wales that makes a red powder, of an admirable sovereigne virtue for curing, as it is told me, all manner of diseases'.⁸¹ The depth of their relationship and the significance of Conway's pain to that relationship is hinted at by More's involvement in her dilemma in 1654 about the use of trepanning. At first, More was sceptical about the treatment, wrestling with the problem, and declaring, 'I am sorry yt the extremity of your disease should drive you to so hard experiments upon your body. But for my own part, I am so confounded in this matter, that I know not what to persuade or dissuade you from. But I hope in God he will, as he has done

⁷⁸ Ibid, f.60r.

⁷⁹ The effects of Conway's mercury poisoning appear only to have abated six months later, when More wrote, 'I am glad the ill effects of your much use of Mercury do abate, and hope that they that say it will not quitt you so easily will prove false Prophets'. BL, MS. Add. 23216, f. 50r. See also Willis (1683), p.134.

⁸⁰ BL, MS. Add. 23216, f.46r.

⁸¹ Ibid.

hitherto, support your spiritts so that if the intended attempt do not do you that ease you wish for, yett it will not prove so deadly and pernicious as others feare'.⁸² In the event, realising that Conway was resolved to travel alone to undergo the treatment, he accompanied her to France. The evidence about whether or not Conway submitted to trepanning is inconclusive. More's early biographer, Richard Ward, suggests, '*she went into France on purpose to have her Cranium open'd (but none durst adventure on it, though they opened her Jugular Arteries)*'.⁸³ Whether or not she was trepanned, or Ward's claim for another drastic measure – bloodletting from the jugular artery – is accurate, Conway's willingness to resort to such invasive and aggressive treatments indicates the severity of her condition. More's participation in the decision and the process implies his embroilment in a friendship that was more intimate and complex than a straightforward relationship between tutor and pupil.

Frequently, her illness forced Conway into withdrawal from company, as letter after letter reports. In 1665, her husband Edward Conway wrote to her brother Heanage Finch that, 'She hath been very little out of her Chamber this summer, except it be sometimes to take the ayre in her coach, you will finde little alteration in her countenance or strength. She is fallen very hard to the learning of Greek, but that she endures extremit[ies] of paine, though not alwayes alike, is not to be doubted'.⁸⁴ Two years later, Edward Conway's mother wrote to him implying that his wife's retreat to her chamber had become almost permanent: 'She does sometimes walke a little in her chamber and sits up most days a little but when her head does ake'.⁸⁵ And, towards the end of her life, in 1674, Conway wrote (using an amanuensis) to George

⁸² Ibid, f.38r.

⁸³ Richard Ward, *The Life of the Learned and Pious Dr. Henry More* (London: Downing, 1710), p.206.

⁸⁴ *Conway Letters*, p.266.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p.291.

Rawdon, who had enquired whether Van Helmont's treatment was taking any effect, reporting, 'my paines and weakness does certainly increase daily, but yett I doubt not, but I have had some releef (God bee thanked) from his medicines, I am sure more then I ever had from ye endeavours of any person whatsoever else'.⁸⁶

In letter writing, Conway was able to replicate the company she was often physically unable to stand. For the greater part of her adult life, she sought comfort in correspondence with More and the pursuit of philosophy. But philosophy was demanding, and More was often anxious that she should not overexert herself. Even his earliest surviving letter to her (dated 21 February 1650) gently reminds her 'to engage your thought no further then will make also for the advantage of the health of your body'.⁸⁷ Another time, he warns, 'Health is better then superfluous knowledge and the most concerning truths lye in a little roome'.⁸⁸ Indeed, More's tutelage of Conway was consistently couched in warnings that his pupil should not 'think of anything anxiously and solicitously, to the vexing or troubling of your spiritts at all'.⁸⁹ But he also recognised the therapeutic value of philosophy. After the death of her mother, in 1661, More advised Conway, 'If you did moderately entertain yourself with some philosophical speculations, I conceive it might drive away more ungrateful thoughts out of your minde and contribute something to your health'.⁹⁰ Conway too acknowledged curative value in philosophy, remarking to More,

I confesse what you hinted in your last is a thing very desirous, to gitt our reason so fortified by principles of Philosophy and Religion as to be able to with stand all the calamities of fortune, but I find my proficiency in these so smale, and my weaknesse so great, that though such considerations may enable me to bear lesser crosses, yet I lie open to

⁸⁶ Huntingdon Library, San Marino, California, HA 14332. *Conway Letters*, p.534.

⁸⁷ BL, MS. Add. 23216, f.4r.

⁸⁸ Ibid, f.246r.

⁸⁹ Ibid, f.2r.

⁹⁰ Ibid, f.76r.

receive the assaults of greater.⁹¹

Conway saw reason as a first line of defence against 'the calamities of fortune'. Reason, 'fortified by principles of Philosophy and Religion', presented a bulwark against calamity, and Conway, though able 'to bear lesser crosses', felt herself vulnerable to the onslaught of greater misfortune. This argues an essential role for the practice of philosophy in Conway's life. As her illness developed, it was necessary for Conway to continue to 'fortify' herself with philosophical and religious learning in order that her reason be strong enough to withstand it.

But there was a vicious circle at work. In the same letter, she apologised to More for her delay in responding to his letters:

I have scarce injoyed so much health as would permit me barely to acquaint you how much my old distemper hath been increased by this late disease, but at the last I have resolved rather to breake through all difficulties then not to informe you of the true cause of my so long silence, which you are wholly to impute to my ill health, although the great sadness of perplexities I have suffered have rendered my thoughts so undigested and confused, that in reason I ought yet to have freed you longer from them.⁹²

Rational thought was essential to Conway's endurance of pain and illness, but her illness also endangered her capacity for rational thought. It left her suffering a 'great sadness of perplexities', rendering her thoughts 'undigested and confused'. Her choice of words suggests an intimate connection between her health and her philosophical capacity. Edward Phillips defines 'Perplexity' as 'doubtfulnesse, incertainty; also trouble, or anguish of minde'.⁹³ And Conway's word 'undigested' hints at a physical, even alimentary, disorder to her philosophical practice, which may be the reason for her inability to disentangle the confusion of notions that confronts her. Conway's

⁹¹ Christ's College, Cambridge, MS. 21, f.4.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Phillips, *New World of English Words*.

reason for writing to More, she said, was a matter of etiquette: she wished to inform him 'of the true cause of my so long silence'. But, in the context of the therapeutic value she claims for philosophy and the danger her illness posed to her rational capacity, it is difficult not to read a self-conscious defiance in her resolution to 'breake through all difficulties' in order to produce the letter.

This statement of intent suggests that it was not only the practice of philosophy that Conway found therapeutic. Her determination to write to More in spite of another onset of her disease implies that correspondence too holds restorative value for her. She has solitude enforced upon her by illness and seems sometimes to crave isolation, but a letter to More written from Ireland in 1661 suggests a wish for community:

The onely happiness I propound to my self in this country is the hopes that I shall be more at leisure then in England, to enjoy the privacy of my owne closett, and therefore I am the more desirous to presse you to a constant correspondence, as well because your letters will make a chief part of my entertainment there as because it will be an argument that I am retained in your memory, in which I shold loath to loose a place, if I may hope you can continue your favour to one that so little knowes to meritt it, at so great distance.⁹⁴

When she admits that she is loath to lose a place in his memory, Conway draws attention to her being 'one that so little knowes to meritt' More's favour, and her standing 'at so great distance' from him. This seeming platitude identifies one of the great inconveniences of her illness: it holds her at a remove from her circle of friends and would-be colleagues. Her headache compels her into isolation, but correspondence can recreate the company she is unable to bear physically. Conway's enforced retreat may afford her a better quality of solitude than her home in Warwickshire but, when alone, it is her wish to press More 'to a constant

⁹⁴ Christ's College, Cambridge, MS. 21, f.5.

correspondence'. Letter-writing enabled intellectual interaction; More's letters, she says, being 'a chief part of my entertainment' and containing a great deal of philosophical advice and argument, assisted her in continuing her therapeutic studies.

This is the context in which Conway writes to More and several of her other correspondents. Letter-writing enabled her to enjoy their intellectual fellowship, bridging the gaps of distance and isolation that illness enforced. She had More send volumes of Descartes to her in Ireland⁹⁵ and petitioned her husband, when he was in Oxford, to procure the works by Boyle that she had not read.⁹⁶ She was frequently 'hendered from writing by my being in Phisicke', but when the More-Conway correspondence was live, it was rigorous: an early letter thanks More 'for the paines you take in affording me a perticular Answere, to every one of my obiections. I professe seriously it is an infinite pleasure I take in reading of your letters; filled with a great deale of reason they are alwayes'.⁹⁷ The 'infinite pleasure' of letters and the 'reason' they contain offered an antidote to 'those violent paines (which [Conway] alwayes thought would be accounted intollerable by a stronger body then I ever had)'.⁹⁸

So far, I have given little attention to the material characteristics of Conway's letters. Mostly, they are conventional, reflecting both her aristocratic rank and the fact that she enjoyed a relationship of some intimacy with More. Typically, they are written in a clear, italic hand on a folio-sized sheet, folded in half, with the letter text written on the first page of the resulting bifolium, the address given on the final one, and the two internal pages left blank. Occasionally, she used a smaller sheet, though still with the same folding practice. When space allowed, a dignified gap of one or

⁹⁵ 'I shall be very glad if you can procure us a copy of the second volume of Des Cartes letters'. Ibid.

⁹⁶ BL, MS. Add. 23214, f.25r.

⁹⁷ Christ's College, Cambridge, MS. 21, f.1.

⁹⁸ Ibid, f.9.

two centimetres was left between letter text and subscription, Conway following this habit in letters to both her husband and More. For a period following the death of her father-in-law, Edward, second Viscount Conway, she observed the mourning convention of sealing her letters with black wax.

Variations from these norms were few: sometimes Conway's hand appears less certain than at others, but handwriting experts warn sternly against reading too deeply into such variations.⁹⁹ One departure from the established practice is, however, significant. Four letters from the final decade of her life survive in the hand of her amanuensis, Charles Coke,¹⁰⁰ all produced when Conway was toying with a conversion to Quakerism.¹⁰¹ The letters and their treatment of Conway's illness put an interesting complexion on her epistolary relationships with More and her husband. In one letter to More, she continued to reflect on her illness though in a newly discursive manner:

The weight of my affliction lies so very heavy upon me, that it is incredible how very seldom I can endure anyone in my chamber, but I find them so still, and very serious, that the company of such of them as I have hitherto seene, will be acceptable to me, as long as I am capable of enjoying any; the particular acquaintance with such living examples of great patience under sundry heavy exercises, both of bodily sicknesse and other calamities (as some of them have related to me) I find begett a more lively fayth and uninterrupted desire of approaching to such a behaviour in like exigencyes, then the most learned and Rhetorical discourses of resignation can doe, though such also are good and profitable in their season¹⁰²

By now Conway acknowledges that hearing Quaker accounts of patience in suffering

⁹⁹ See Tom Davis, 'The Analysis of Handwriting: An Introductory Survey', in Peter Davison, ed., *The Book Encompassed: Studies in Twentieth-Century Bibliography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 57-68.

¹⁰⁰ Two of these letters are held in the British Library as MS. Add. 23214, ff.40 and 41, and the other two are held in the Library of the Religious Society of Friends at MS. Box X, 3. *Conway Letters*, pp.407-209 and 420-423.

¹⁰¹ BL, MS. Add. 23214, f.41 is effectively a codicil to Conway's will, in which she rejects the rites of the Church of England for her burial. She makes a reference to its 'being writt with my owne hand' which 'may give it sufficient assurance to any concerned that they were all omitted upon my desire'. Conway's will itself is in the National Archives, PROB 11/2080/260.

¹⁰² *Conway Letters*, pp.421-422.

'begett a more lively fayth and uninterrupted desire of approaching to such a behaviour in like exigencyes, then the most learned and Rhetorical discourses of resignation can doe'. The letter seems to mark the adoption of the type of heart religion central to Quaker experience. In doing that, she shifted from an epistolary community to one that was physically present, if only intermittently. In the Quakers – 'living examples of great patience' labouring under 'sundry heavy exercises, both of bodily sicknesse and other calamities' – Conway found new exemplars for her endurance of pain.

Often, in Conway's final years More was forced to glean information from her companion, Elizabeth Foxcroft. In 1669, he wrote to Foxcroft, beginning his letter with an acknowledgement of one from her and a response to its news about Conway's health ('I am glad my Lady received so much satisfaction from the discourse you mention, but am exceeding sorry that her illnesse growes so much upon her that she is so seldome in case to divertise her self with such her usuall divertisements of reading or being read to. I pray God send her more ease and strength').¹⁰³ In 1671, he wrote to Conway, 'I am glad to heare your Ladiship has escaped this late danger mentioned in Mrs Foxcrofts letter'.¹⁰⁴ A year later, he was writing again to Foxcroft, lamenting, 'I am exceeding sorry to heare that any new distempers are added to her constant pains to aggrieve her Ladiship. I pray God enable her to endure all thinges, and fitt us all for the changes and chances of this muddy part of the Universe, we poor Mortalls dwell in. But I hope you will send me better newes in your next letter'.¹⁰⁵

The Conway letters represent an epistolary community that occupies a small

¹⁰³ BL, MS. Add. 23216, f.94r.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, f.206v.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, f.120r.

corner of the Republic of Letters, exchanging philosophical arguments and news, and, though Conway and More are its principal participants, others, like Foxcroft, engage in the network, while still more, like Van Helmont, are involved by friendship and frequently being in the company of Conway or More during their epistolary exchanges. Others like Ralph Cudworth, Boyle and Descartes are passively co-opted into the network through the discussion of their thought and works. But the letters of Conway and More approach a relationship of greater intimacy than those of, for instance, the Hartlib circle. Letters from the Republic were sometimes sceptical of sharing the details of personal health: writing to Boyle, Hartlib rebuked himself for slipping briefly into a mention of his own recent ague, chiding, 'But who can complain of personal maladies, when the publick is so much distempered?'¹⁰⁶ More too acknowledged that 'whatsoever is corporeall and personall proves a troublesome intanglement or an unexpected dodge and mockery to the affectionate minde of a man',¹⁰⁷ but his letters to Conway dwelt heavily on illness. The trap of regarding More and Conway as entirely private confidants has also to be avoided. As examples from the late correspondence demonstrate, Conway regarded some of her letters as public proclamations, having them copied by an amanuensis along with a codicil to her will.¹⁰⁸ Often, More corresponded to Foxcroft, who was able to give him as good an account of Conway's health as she could. And, even from the earliest years of the correspondence, Conway saw her case history filtered into

¹⁰⁶ Boyle, *Corresp.*, I, p.340. For a discussion of the Republic of Letters and its (much-frustrated) aims to keep personal reflection from philosophical correspondence, see Lorraine Dalston, 'The Ideal and Reality of the Republic of Letters in the Enlightenment', *Science in Context*, 4:2 (1991), 367-386.

¹⁰⁷ BL, MS. Add. 23216, f.6r.

¹⁰⁸ In this final attempt to assert control over her body – asking that, at her funeral, 'all those Rites and ceremonys of the so called Church of England may be wholly forborne' (BL, MS. Add. 23214, f.52r) – Conway was confounded. As Sarah Hutton notes, 'Her request for a Quaker funeral was not observed. She was interred with full Anglican rites in the parish church at Arrow, Warwickshire, on 17 April 1679'. Hutton, *Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher*, p.216.

the wider epistolary networks of More and her husband. In examining the intimacies that passed between More and Conway, the practicalities of exchanging and receiving such personal information, and the frequent involvement of third and fourth parties should not be overlooked.

DONNE'S LETTERS TO ANNE COCKAYNE

In his final illness, Donne too developed an epistolary relationship. His correspondence with Ann Cockayne dwelled heavily on his health and encroaching death, and bears similarity to the correspondence of Conway and More in stemming from a close epistolary companionship which is less free of third party interference than might be assumed. Donne's letters are more complex texts than those of Conway and More. One problem is that only thirty-eight of Donne's letters survive as autograph manuscripts with 192 existing solely in printed versions, principally in the *Letters to Several Persons of Honour* (1651) and the *Collection of Letters made by Sir Tobie Mathews* (1660). The evidence, where autograph and print versions of a letter can be compared, suggests that neither print collection offers reliable texts of the letters it presents.¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately, source texts for Donne's late letters to Cockayne can be traced back only as far as the two print editions. To a certain extent, the questionable wording, spelling, punctuation and lay-out of the printed versions, though it needs to be kept in mind, must be lived-with (sensitivity to the types of editorial error, as demonstrated by Ernest Sullivan, that John Donne the younger introduced to his father's letters can surely help).¹¹⁰ The lack of material texts, on the

¹⁰⁹ See I. A. Shapiro, 'The Text of Donne's *Letters to Severall Persons*', *Review of English Studies*, 7 (1931), 291-301; Roger Bennett, 'Donne's *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*', *PMLA*, 56 (1941), 120-140; and Ernest Sullivan, 'Problems in Editing John Donne's Letters: Unreliable Primary Materials', *Literature Compass*, 6:2 (2009), 433-445.

¹¹⁰ See Sullivan, 'Problems in Editing John Donne's Letters', especially, pp.434-438, and 'Appendix A'.

other hand, can be somewhat compensated for by examining the internal evidence of materiality that these letters present; inferences about the letters' methods of carriage can be drawn, which might call into question casual assumptions of these texts as personal or intimate documents.

Donne and Cockayne had the habit of using unknown carriers to bear their letters and sometimes co-opted others into the process. In November 1628, hearing a rumour of Donne's death, Cockayne had her servant write to the preacher's household for confirmation, instructing that a reply should be given by return. When the letter arrived, however, 'because there were so many hours, between his receipt of the Letter and the return of the Carrier',¹¹¹ Donne's servant found opportunity to acquaint his master with its contents. Donne was 'not sorrie he did so', writing to Cockayne, 'I have found this rumour of my death to have made so deep impressions, and to have been so peremptorily believed, that I have been entreated to signifie under my hand, that I am yet alive'.¹¹² His intervention in the process implies Donne's sense of a need to give Cockayne authenticated testimony to dispel the rumour. Redolent of the letter to Henry Goodyer of 1607 in which he proclaimed, 'Letters have truly the same office, as oaths',¹¹³ Donne's need to 'signifie under' his own hand perhaps indicates the intimacy of his relationship with Cockayne.

Edmund Gosse remarked that Donne was, 'Always more confidential to Mrs Cokain than to any other friend', noting that 'he gives her particulars of his ailments such as are not vouchsafed to the Master of Charterhouse' (George Gerrard, to whom Donne also wrote a number of letters in his final years).¹¹⁴ One reason for this might

¹¹¹ Matthew, *A Collection of Letters*, p.338.

¹¹² Ibid, pp.338-339.

¹¹³ Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*, p.114.

¹¹⁴ Edmund Gosse, *The Life and Letters of John Donne*, 2 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1899), II, p.269.

be that, in writing to Gerrard, Donne participated in a more extensive epistolary network than when he wrote to Cockayne. His letters to Gerrard, even in later years, contain numerous messages to be passed on to others as well as matters of business and evidence of a similar (perhaps broader) assortment of carriers and use of personal servants to perform extra-textual duties.¹¹⁵ With more people participating in Gerrard's epistolary network than Cockayne's, Gerrard had more opportunity to hear of Donne's health without the need for it to be addressed in their letters.

The letters to Cockayne make it plain that, in several cases, Donne's motive for detailing his symptoms was that she had asked him to. Their correspondence observed the protocols of request and response (protocols which, more than once, he chides Gerrard for failing to uphold).¹¹⁶ In one letter, he reported that 'Your Letter, upon the two and twentieth of *August*, which I received this day, laies a commandment upon me, to give you an account of my state in health'.¹¹⁷ Donne gave a 270-word discourse including contextual information about his having returned to his London home to find it beset by the pox, and his subsequent movements to avoid contagion. While he was going about that, he reports,

I was seized with a Feavour, which grew so upon me, as forced me to a resolution of seeking my Physitian at *London*. Thither I came in a day, and a little piece; and within four miles of home, I was surprised with an accident in the Coach, which never befell me before, nor had been much in my contemplation, and therefore affected me much. It was a violent falling of the *Uvula*. Which when Doctor *Fox* (whom I found at *London*, and who had not been there in ten daies before) considered well, and perceived the feavour complicated with a Squinancie; by way of prevention of both, he presentlie took blood; and so with ten-daies-starving in a close prison, that is, my bed, I am (blessed be God) returned to a convenient temper, and pulse, and appetite, and learn to eat, and this day met the acceptable guest

¹¹⁵ 'I have a servant, *Roper*, at *Pauls* house, who will receive your commandments at all times'. Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*, p.287.

¹¹⁶ 'Sir if there be a Proclamation in *England* against writing to me, yet since it is thereby become a matter of state, you might have told M. *Pory* so'. Ibid, p.262.

¹¹⁷ Matthew, *A Collection of Letters*, pp.341-342.

in the acceptable manner, your Letter, walking in my chamber.¹¹⁸

If this list of travels, accidents, symptoms, diagnoses, treatments, habits and recoveries seems more comprehensive than might be expected from what was presumably a polite inquiry as to his health, Donne felt so too. He explained, 'All which I tell you with these particularities, lest my sickness might be presented by rumour worse, than God hath been pleased to make it'.¹¹⁹ His purpose is to forestall a recurrence of the incident in which Cockayne had heard rumour of his death, though it might have had an additional purpose. There was surely no need to mention the injury to his uvula, nor to use the term 'Squinancie';¹²⁰ there was no need to give the number of days he had been bedridden. But, by arming Cockayne with detailed information about his sickness and health, endorsed by reference to the professional opinion of his doctor, Simeon Foxe, Donne might not only insulate her from susceptibility to rumour, but also enable her to disseminate accurate information among her wider circle of acquaintances, thereby stemming the flow of hearsay at an earlier stage in its transmission.

But that was not his only purpose. Towards the end of the passage, metaphors begin to enter the account. Donne's claim to have been 'ten-daies-starving in a close prison, that is, my bed' is perhaps designed to appeal to his addressee's sympathies in a way that a plain case history would not. What is more, it sets up an extended analogy. Not only is Donne a starving prisoner, but Cockayne and their epistolary relationship are co-opted into the account. Conceiving of the letter as a guest entertained where previously he had been isolated and starving, Donne gives full expression to the familial intimacy he believes correspondence to stand in for.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pp.342-343.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.343.

¹²⁰ Squinancie is probably an alternative term for quinsy, a disease involving 'inflammation or swelling of the throat or part of the throat, esp. tonsillitis; an instance of this (OED).'

Donne was not accustomed to sharing his symptoms in such detail, either by letter or in conversation. In a letter to Cockayne, written in January 1630, he again acknowledged her request that he give report of his health.

But that it is sweetned by your command, nothing could trouble me more, then to write of my self. Yet, if I would have it known, I must write it my self; for, I neither tell children, nor servants, my state.¹²¹

Donne's claim to be reluctant to discuss his symptoms is borne out to the extent that his letters to other recipients are far less detailed on that subject. A letter to Henry Goodyer with the same intention of preventing the spread of misinformation goes to notably less trouble, reporting, 'I write this Letter in no very great degree of a convalescence from such storms of a stomack colik as kept me in a continuall vomiting, so that I know not what I should have been able to doe to dispatch this winde, but that an honest fever came and was my physick: I tell you of it onely lest some report should make it worse'.¹²² And a letter to Robert Ker was more succinct still, noting, 'Perchance others may have told you, that I am relapsed into my Fever; but that which I must intreat you to condole with me, is, that I am relapsed into good degrees of health'.¹²³ Donne's verb relapse, applied to health, not illness, expresses, albeit in witty, conduplicative terms, the religious significance he saw in his physical suffering. The rhetorical character of the pronouncement, and its being balanced against information Ker may have had from 'others', suggest that Donne may have intended his statement as a correction to the popular belief that he was relapsed into 'Fever'. As his explanation to Cockayne has it, Donne's motive for writing about himself is partly that he 'would have' his 'state' known, implying that his detailed account of his illness had a public purpose that went beyond simply correcting

¹²¹ Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*, p.316.

¹²² Ibid, p.316.

¹²³ Ibid, p.273.

Cockayne's misapprehensions.

The idea develops into an expression of Donne being engaged in the business of holy dying.

I have never good temper, nor good pulse, nor good appetite, nor good sleep. Yet, I have so much leasure to recollect my self, as that I can thinke I have been long thus, or often thus. I am not alive, because I have not had enough upon me to kill me, but because it pleases God to passe me through many infirmities before he take me either by those particular remembrances, to bring me to particular repentances, or by them to give me hope of his particular mercies in heaven. Therefore have I been more affected with Coughs in vehemence, more with deafenesse, more with toothach, more with the vurbah, then heretofore. All this mellows me for heaven, and so ferments me in this world, as I shall need no long concoction in the grave, but hasten to the resurrection. Not onely to be nearer that grave, but to be nearer to the service of the Church, as long as I shall be able to do any...¹²⁴

Donne's response to Cockayne's 'command' is rather different from those accounts of his illness in which he hoped to preempt misleading rumours. He is still systematic in his descriptions – accounting for temper, pulse, appetite and rest; listing deafness, toothache and vurbah¹²⁵ – but an obvious thread of pious self-reflection has developed. His acknowledgment that 'I am not alive, because I have not had enough upon me to kill me, but because it pleases God to passe me through many infirmities before he take me either by those particular remembrances, to bring me to particular repentances, or by them to give me hope of his particular mercies in heaven', recollects the theology of *ars moriendi* literature that was still popular during the seventeenth century. Thomas Becon's *Sicke Mannes Salve*, for example, prescribes,

¹²⁴ Ibid, pp.316-317.

¹²⁵ The term 'vurbah' has not been adequately defined. I have seen no instance of it other than in the 1651 *Letters*, raising suspicion that it may be a misprint or variant spelling for 'verber' meaning a stick or rod. The definition given by Thomas Thomas, *Dictionarium Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae* (London: Boyle, 1587) implies the term might be used in relation to sickness. 'Verber, eris, n.g. A small long sticke or twig in a vine tree, a long thing like a stripe: a wand, to beat with, a scourge, a whip: & plur. Verbera. Strokes, stripes, ashes. also the vehement heat of the sun beams or blastes of winde, Lucret'. Thomas Elyot draws attention to another Latin form, 'Verbero, rare, to beate, to punyshe'. Thomas Elyot, *Bibliotheca Eliotae Eliotis Librarie* (London: Bertheleti, 1542).

'This is a great comfort for a Christian man in his affliction, to heare that God punisheth him in this world to this end, that he may cease to sinne, that hee may repent, turne againe unto the Lord his God, and so for euer be saued'.¹²⁶ Illness for Donne performs that function in a specifically physiological way. His claim that his catalogue of symptoms 'ferments me for heaven' such that he 'shall need no long concoction in the grave', draws on the lexicons of digestion and alchemy. Stephen Blankaart's *Physical Dictionary* defines 'fermentio' as 'an Intestine Motion of Particles, or of the Principles of any Body, tending to Perfection, or a Change', while 'concoction' is 'the fermentation of the smallest Particles which our Nourishment consists of, that they may be made fit and proper for the nourishment and increase of a Living Body'.¹²⁷ Donne's body, decaying even before he reaches his grave, also tends towards its resurrection.

Donne's late letters to Cockayne are not free of anxiety about his illness and death. His final letter to her announces:

My noble sister, I am afraid that Death will play with me so long, as he will forget to kill me; and suffer me to live in a languishing and uselesse age, A life, that is rather a forgetting that I am dead, then of living. We dispute whether the dead shall pray for the living: and because my life may be short, I pray with the most earnestnesse for you now. By the advantage of sicknesse I return the oftner to that holy exercise, and in it joyn yours with mine own Soul.¹²⁸

Donne's fear is an extension of his characteristic anxiety about the post mortem condition of his body,¹²⁹ and, here, his anxiety about being consigned to a living limbo of sickness contrasts with his description in the letter above of the spiritual fermentation his ailing body was undergoing in preparation for resurrection. In spite

¹²⁶ Thomas Becon, *The Sicke Mannes Salve* (London: Day, 1561), p.74.

¹²⁷ Stephen Blankaart, *A Physical Dictionary* (London: Crouch, 1684), pp.130 and 68.

¹²⁸ Mathews, *A Collection of Letters*, p.351.

¹²⁹ In a sermon, he insists, 'And, *Destroyed by wormes*, which is another descent in this humiliation, and exinanition of man, in death; *After my skinne, wormes shall destroy this body*'. John Donne, *Fifty Sermons* (London: Flesher, 1649), p.114.

of its self-reflexivity, this passage contains familiar expressions of public duty. Donne is reminded of his Christian obligations, of prayer to Cockayne (being a pious friend with little available time) and of making preparations for death. The self-abnegating desire in sickness to pray for others certainly struck Donne in his final years. In December 1630, he wrote to Gerrard that 'life or health, or strength (I thank God) enter not into my prayers for myself; for others they do'.¹³⁰ Donne's frequent concern in these letters, it seems, was to give an account of himself as performing charitable duties befitting his ministerial vocation.

The surviving contextual evidence about the letters to Cockayne is sparse, but what there is has afforded glimpses of their proximity to circulating gossip and the leakage of unauthorised information. These letters cannot, then, be automatically assumed to have been secure nor their contents to have been treated in confidence. Although his anxiety and concern with self-examination are evident, Donne also appears to rise above those instincts, adopting the practices of conventional piety and holy dying for the benefit of a readership that might extend beyond the letters' addressee.

II.

The second part of this chapter requires further introduction. Here, I turn to letters describing their writers' sicknesses and symptoms and seeking medical advice in return.¹³¹ Often, such letters strove for rhetorical detachment in analysing their

¹³⁰ Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*, p.241.

¹³¹ Although the practice of seeking diagnosis or medical advice by letter has its beginnings in the restoration period, much scholarship has treated it as an eighteenth-century phenomenon. See Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, *Patient's Progress: Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1989), pp. 76-8, Laurence Brockliss, 'Consultation by Letter in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris: The Medical Practice of Etienne-Francois Geoffroy', in Ann La Berge and Mordechai Feingold, eds., *French Medical Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994), 79-117, and Wayne Wild, 'Doctor-Patient Correspondence

authors' symptoms, though the demeanour of medical empiricism was not always easy to maintain. Many letters seeking medical advice were sent between friendly or collegial correspondents, but often they were written speculatively by strangers to physicians. A striking example of the first type of letter is that written in 1683 by the antiquary and clergyman Miles Gale to the naturalist and physician Martin Lister, both, at the time, Yorkshire residents. The letter's opening reveals that the pair had struck up a correspondence in which Lister had already offered his services, sending a 'stomack Electuary' for which Gale extends thanks.¹³² The 600-word letter is notably detailed. Written in a clear hand, consistent with that of Gale's other surviving letter to Lister,¹³³ it delivers a barrage of Gale's symptoms and medicine-taking described chronologically, paying careful attention to the timescale of each. Being forced, he reports, 'to be my own Dr', Gale took a vomit, which he describes in detail:

it was of double daffodilly Roots boild in Posset drinck this brought up great store of phleme & an Humour of a dark redd colour, ye last 3 or 4 spoonfulls of every Vomit beeing redder yn ye rest, very like blood, tho wn it was saued by it selfe it congealed not, but turned to a black waterish humour after this I purged for 2 dayes wth siruup of Roses, being ill in head wh bound in body, after all these means I fell worse yn ever¹³⁴

Gale's careful empiricism, enumerating the details and effects of his treatments, is plain to read: the changing appearance of his phlegm and his medicinal responses are meticulously charted. But the treatment had not been successful and Gale had turned to another expert, receiving some curious advice:

in this extremity Mr Starkey advised me to swallow quick twice a day 15 of those Insects. As elli, Multipedes, Hoglice, comonly called Hobthrush lice. Haueing used ym one day ye pain at my stomach abated, & my

in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Change in Rhetoric and Relationship', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 29 (2000), 47-64.

¹³² Bodleian Library, MS. Lister 3, f.105r.

¹³³ See Bodleian Library, MS. Lister 35, ff.76-77.

¹³⁴ Bodleian Library, MS. Lister 3, f.105r.

faintness ceased, since wch I haue used ym every day, about 30 of a day tho' ye dispensitory advises but from 3 to 12.¹³⁵

This treatment had better effect, with Gale reporting, since taking the Hoglice, 'my stomach has recover'd to a wonder'.¹³⁶ The purpose of the letter was not only to acquaint Lister with this astonishing recovery, but to request specific advice about the practice of ingesting insects medicinally: 'you may please to send word whether you commend ye use of ym longer yn 10 dayes together'.¹³⁷ Not only was Gale taking a significantly higher than recommended dose, his use was unconventional. Usually, hoglice were prescribed as a diuretic. *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis* recommended eating hoglice to 'provoke urine' and 'help the yellow Jaundice', as well as including them in a recipe for ear drops.¹³⁸ Thomas Willis used the creatures in various purgatives, as well as in a cure for dropsy¹³⁹ and in recipes to treat convulsions,¹⁴⁰ asthma,¹⁴¹ and gout.¹⁴² Gale's illness, however, was 'a diziness in my forehead to wch soon after was added a sickness of stomach'.¹⁴³ He therefore set out to give Lister as complete a history as possible, in order to receive advice on the treatment's application in his own case. In common with the data-collecting habit of Hooke's diary, Gale's letter is stylistically terse and philosophically precise, applying the empirical ideals of the Republic of Letters to personal illness and care.

This principle was perhaps easier to apply between correspondents known to one another, but numerous letters seeking medical advice were sent speculatively to experts. A letter to Boyle from Lodowick Jackson of 1686 presents a similarly

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ *Pharm. Lond.*, p.30.

¹³⁹ Thomas Willis, *Dr. Willis's Practice of Physick* (London: Dring, 1684), II, p.209.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, I, p.64.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, II, p.82.

¹⁴² Ibid, II, p.207.

¹⁴³ Bodleian Library, MS. Lister 3, f.105r.

detailed medical history. Jackson had 'been violently afflicted with the Gout, or Rhumatisme, almost in every Joynt'.¹⁴⁴ He approached Boyle more tentatively than Gale had Lister, insisting, 'I am not unknowne to your Honourable Family', though he did not elaborate on how he was acquainted with the Boyles.¹⁴⁵ Jackson appealed to Boyle on philosophical terms rather than personal, enclosing a printed 'Advertisement for Hoxdon Wells', and announcing that his desire was 'to give you an experimented Satisfaction, touching the nature & operation of these waters'.¹⁴⁶ His case history is similarly detailed to Gale's, reporting each day how much of the well's water he has drunk and the stools and urine he has produced since. As well as drinking the water, he reports, 'I alsoe bathe my feet and knees in the Water mixt with my urin, but find but little good as yet by either'.¹⁴⁷ Like Gale, he has a specific question for Boyle: 'Now Sir my humble, request is, that you vouchsafe me your opinion, for my better Government while I stay here, and what other observations, I shall make for your satisfaction, either by my drinkeing A Lesse or Larger quantity, or what other rules you thinke propper'.¹⁴⁸

In this part of the chapter, I will examine more carefully accounts of illness written to elicit medical advice, looking for evidence of the differences in the writer-recipient relationship between these letters and the correspondence between families and acquaintances that I examined in the first section. That writers of letters seeking medical advice often sought rhetorical detachment but lapsed quickly into the manner of old epistolary relationships is my principal claim.

¹⁴⁴ Royal Society, RB/3/7, f.40.

¹⁴⁵ Presumably the connection was an Irish one, Jackson having been comptroller and sub-collector of the port of Youghal (county Cork) for the Irish revenue in the 1660s. He was later 'forced to come to England for his health'. See William Shaw, ed., *Calendar of Treasury Books: 1685-1689* (London: Public Record Office, 1923), p.148.

¹⁴⁶ Royal Society, RB/3/7, f.40.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

EDWARD LHWYD'S LETTERS TO LISTER

The letters of the the naturalist Edward Lhwyd to Martin Lister were the product of an extensive collegial exchange of ideas. Lhwyd, who would later become keeper of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, began to correspond with Lister and John Ray in the mid-1680s. He had arrived in Oxford in 1682, becoming associated with the Oxford Philosophical Society, led by Robert Plot, the museum's first keeper.¹⁴⁹ His network of correspondents widened in the 1690s, when he began also to exchange letters, principally on geological matters, with fellow naturalists William Nicholson, Richard Richardson and John Woodward.¹⁵⁰ His prolific letter-writing was kept up until his death in 1707, leaving a corpus of letters running to over two thousand items written and received by him.

Lister had medical expertise as well as botanical and entomological learning. In September 1683, he moved from Yorkshire to London, where, in 1685, he was elected vice-president of the Royal Society (Pepys held the presidency).¹⁵¹ He had no medical degree but was granted a royal charter to become a fellow of the College of Physicians in 1687.¹⁵² More than three hundred letters from Lhwyd to Lister survive and more than 270 from Lister to Lhwyd. Mostly, their correspondence concerns the shells, plants, fossils and stone of Wales, Oxfordshire and further afield (with many

¹⁴⁹ See Gunther, XIV, pp.56-58.

¹⁵⁰ Sixty-three letters from Nicholson to Lhwyd survive from the period 1692-1709 (principally in Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 1816), although there are only three from Lhwyd to Nicholson (Cardiff Central Library, MS. 2.110, BL, MS. Add. 78648, f.81 and MS. Harley 2289, ff. 158-159). There are forty-nine letters from Richardson to Lhwyd (Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. hist. c. 11 and MS. Ashmole 1817a), and thirty-two from Lhwyd to Richardson (various repositories). Thirty letters from Woodward to Lhwyd are preserved (Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 1817b and MS. Eng. hist. c. 11), and one from Woodward to Lhwyd (Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 1816, f.77).

¹⁵¹ See Thomas Birch, *The History of the Royal Society of London for Improving of Natural Knowledge*, 4 vols. (London: Millar, 1756), IV, p.355.

¹⁵² See *Munks Roll*, I, p.442.

samples passing between them).¹⁵³ Lhwyd's work at the Ashmolean museum (and, in their early correspondence, his ambition to succeed to Plot's position there) is another prominent subject of the letters.

My concern, here, is particularly with one short letter, written in November 1692, that stands out as unusual among the correspondence. Before this, Lhwyd's last surviving contact with Lister had been a letter of 25 September in which he sought advice on the matter of a friend who was about to travel to Barbados to begin a ministry and 'how he may be serviceable to us'.¹⁵⁴ Lister's response seems not to have reached Lhwyd,¹⁵⁵ but on 19 November of the same year, he wrote, having heard of a trip to the West Indies that Lhwyd proposed to make, warning him about the dangers of wars and 'unsettledness of the plantations'.¹⁵⁶ Six days later, Lhwyd wrote again. The letter is sufficiently brief to quote in full:

Dear Sir,

I am so afflicted with a pain in one of the Kidneys (as I take it) and an excessive swelling and hardnesse of the Testicles; that I must humbly beg your advice and Directions the next post: haveing no such Interest with the Oxford physicians, as to expect their advice gratis

I think (if I were in order) I ought to write to Dr Plucknet; but herein I also desire your Instructions, &c. I am Dear Sir,

Oxf. Thursday morning.

Your most affectionate
and Obliged Servant
Edw Lhwyd

If Sir Jo. Trevor's, or the Marquesse of Caermardhyn's Interest will contribute anything to my goeing to the W. Indies, I doe not much doubt, but it may be procured.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ For example, on 5 November 1693, Lhwyd send Lister a sample of live snails: 'I have now sent a small basket by Edward Bartlet with a dozen of the *Cochlea striatæ et turbinatæ* Col. and five *Cochleæ sylvaticæ spirâ ult. in aciem depressâ.* with live creatures in them'. Bodleian Library, MS. Lister 36, f.74.

¹⁵⁴ Bodleian Library, MS. Lister 36, f.38r.

¹⁵⁵ His next letter begins 'I doubt yt you did not my last, but not having heard from you'. See Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole, 1816, f.93.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Bodleian Library, MS. Lister 3, f.131r.

The second paragraph and the postscript place the letter in the context of the debate about Lhwyd's West Indian voyage, for which he was seeking support from the botanist and superintendent of Hampton Court gardens, Leonard Plukenet.¹⁵⁸ Before coming to Lhwyd's plea for medical assistance, I want to observe the textual differences between this letter and other items of the Lhwyd-Lister correspondence. The letter has much in common with Lhwyd's others to Lister: it observes a left-hand margin of 3cm, with only the salutation and the place and date information encroaching into it. There is an upper margin of 2.5cm and a gap of 1cm between the salutation and beginning of the text. The subscription and signature follow hard after the text but they convey a degree of formality, being confined to the right-hand part of the page. The date is written into the space on the left side of the page, adjacent to the subscription and between the letter text and postscript. But, although the usual formalities in lay-out have been observed, in a departure from habit, the letter is written in the top half of a quarto-sized page in portrait orientation. It has not been folded in two, nor wrapped in another address-sheet as was often Lhwyd's practice. The single page was folded into quarters, sealed and addressed (it bears a postal endorsement as well as the seal and address, demonstrating that this was the condition in which it was sent).

The letter's text is notable for two connected reasons: its concision and the faith that Lhwyd places in postal efficiency. Unlike Jackson writing to Boyle, or Gale to Lister, Lhwyd has no need to give contextual information. Neither does he find need for preamble or nicety. Immediately, he announces his symptoms – 'pain in one

¹⁵⁸ In his letter to of 23 December 1692, Lhwyd begs Lister's favour to 'trouble of you, if you think fit; to thank Dr Plukenet, for his obliging Letter, & kind promise of furthering (as occasion shall be offer'd) my Employment in the W. Ind'. Bodleian Library, MS. Lister 36, f.40r.

of the Kidneys' and 'an excessive swelling and hardnesse of the Testicles'. The only slight margin for doubt is given by his parenthetical phrase '(as I take it)', indicating that he cannot certainly ascribe his pain to his kidneys rather than, for instance, his lower back. The next sentence is similarly blunt, begging Lister's assistance and entreating him to send it by 'the next post'. Finally, although Lhwyd had no need to establish his relationship to Lister, he does invoke it to help explain why he should be turning to him for assistance, rather than one of the physicians at his immediate disposal in Oxford. The reasons are pecuniary: he cannot consult an Oxford physician without incurring a charge.¹⁵⁹

In these lines, Lhwyd has given his symptoms, asked for advice and forestalled any objections Lister might have about why it should be he that is consulted. But there might be a reason for Lhwyd's wish to consult Lister that he does not mention. As his demand that Lister respond by the next post indicates, Lhwyd felt time was of the essence, though, for some reason – perhaps the matter was becoming urgent; perhaps it was simply force of habit – he added the extraneous detail that he was still conscious of his need to write to Plukenet, and to receive Lister's advice in that connection.

The letter is dated 'Thursday morning' and stamped with the postmark 'NO/25' (25 November, which was a Friday). If Lister had complied with Lhwyd's request, he could have received the letter at his Westminster home on the Friday and – even using the formal post rather than despatching a private carrier – have had his advice reach Oxford by Saturday 26 November. Lhwyd's dating the letter 'Thursday morning' rather than giving a numerical date, as was his usual practice, may either

¹⁵⁹ Richard Ellis points out that Lhwyd was forced to work almost from his arrival at Oxford and that, even when he took a position at the Ashmolean museum, it 'was undignified and unremunerative'. See Richard Ellis, 'Some Incidents in the Life of Edward Lhuyd', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1906/7), 1-51, pp.3-4 and 7.

indicate haste in composing and sending the letter, or suggest that he was expecting a response from Lister within days rather than weeks.

In either case, Lhwyd clearly felt that, in seeking practical advice about an illness with an acute onset, efficiency was critical. He had to convey his situation concisely and adopt the fastest and most reliable means of securing assistance. This entailed stripping his letters of all personal data but the relevant symptoms, except where appealing (indirectly) to his relationship to and faith in Lister was likely to help prompt the physician to act. By the following Wednesday, he had recovered and had greater leisure to write:

I received your very kind Letter; but since my last the case is strangely alter'd with me. for whereas I was then in very great pain & disorder; I am now (for the matter) as well as ever I was in my Life. I had purged thrice before, & that I believe has carried it off. The swelling's not quite gone, but decreases dayly. The purge I took last did not work with me; & that I suppose was the occasion I was so very sick: for in four or five days I could neither eat nor drink. I have not been accustom'd to take purges or any other physick; this being but the third time, that I can remember ever to have taken any. What ever I take in that kind I am apt to return by Vomit in half an hour's time.¹⁶⁰

As well as being significantly longer, this letter is materially different to its predecessor. It is written conventionally on a half-folio page folded into a bifolium, with the text on the inside recto page. The hand is similar, though less cramped, and Lhwyd now affords himself slightly more space between his lines, which, in the text demanding assistance, tended to bunch together. The letter is dated 30 November (the following Wednesday), so Lister, though his letter is now lost, had evidently replied within four days of receipt. Now at ease, Lhwyd has leeway for self-reflection, comparing his present condition to his earlier state, and judging, 'I am now (for the matter) as well as ever I was in my Life'. He is able to reason cause (a

¹⁶⁰ Bodleian Library, MS. Lister 3, f.167r.

failed purgative) from effect (kidney pain and testicular swelling) without wasting time or prejudicing Lister's advice. His sickness, being alleviated, has taken on the qualities of a topic of philosophical discussion, and his physic-taking – as Hooke's – a matter of experimental interest.

BENJAMIN FURLY'S LETTERS TO LOCKE

Benjamin Furly's letters to Locke seeking medical advice made greater play of the pair's intimate relationship than did Lhwyd's to Lister. Furly's friendship with Locke was struck up when both men were in their fifties. Locke took up residence with Furly in 1687, and wrote his *Two Treatises of Government* as well as reworking his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* from Furly's Rotterdam home. After Locke's return to Britain, the friendship was maintained through regular correspondence. Ninety-six letters from Furly to Locke survive between 1688 and 1704, the year of the philosopher's death, though only fourteen of Locke's letters to Furly are extant. The correspondence was wide ranging, covering politics, religion and book-collecting. Health, on Furly's side at least, was a prominent subject, and his letters to Locke contain many graphic details of his ailments and medicine-taking, with references to the condition of his bowels especially numerous.¹⁶¹

Furly also enjoyed a regular correspondence with Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, much of which is preserved in the National Archives.¹⁶² Shaftesbury, along with Locke, was a member of the philosophical Lantern group

¹⁶¹ Locke had medical training, though never practised. His medical papers, held in the National Archives, include a set of notes taken on a liver operation that Shaftesbury underwent in 1668. See National Archives, PRO 30/24/47/2, ff.1-30 and 81-82.

¹⁶² The correspondence preserved in National Archives, PRO 30/24 contains forty-six of the Earl's letters to Furly and only four from Furly to Shaftesbury, as well as one letter from Furly to Michael Aynsworth. Hampshire Record Office, 9M73/G257 has five letters from Furly to Shaftesbury.

that met at Furly's Rotterdam home.¹⁶³ Letters to another member of the group, the Quaker leader William Penn, survive in the Library of the Religious Society of Friends.¹⁶⁴ Eight letters from Furly to the Whig politician Edward Clarke, the trustee of Shaftesbury's grandfather, and one to Clarke's wife, Mary, are in the Bodleian Library,¹⁶⁵ and the British Library has four of Furly's letters: one to the Duke of Marlborough, another to Henry Davenant and two to Pierre Desmaizeaux.¹⁶⁶ None of these letters match the interest in Furly's health of his correspondence with Locke.

The letters to Locke, held in the Bodleian Library, are informal but conventional. Usually written on quarto-sized pages, they tend to make little use of significant space, though mostly a left-hand margin is maintained, at least on the first page of each letter. Furly's hand is clear and consistent. Usually, he addresses Locke as 'Dear Friend' or 'D.F.' though sometimes he gives the more formal 'Sir' or 'Dear Sir'.

Although the information about his illness is often embedded among conversational writing on other subjects, Furly, nonetheless, uses his letters to seek Locke's medical advice. Like Gale and Jackson, Furly seems sometimes to write having already taken medical advice and seeking a second opinion. On 6 February 1691, he wrote to Locke, having consulted his regular physician, Tobias Ludovicus Kolhans,¹⁶⁷ and reached the conclusion that his taking laudanum for a recurrence of

¹⁶³ For discussions of the group see Luisa Simonutti, 'English Guests at "De Lantaarn": Sidney, Penn, Locke, Toland and Shaftesbury' in Sarah Hutton, ed., *Benjamin Furly 1646-1714: A Quaker Merchant and his Milieu* (Firenze: Olschki, 2007), 31-66, and Stuart Brown, "'Hereticks of the Lanterne': Furly and van Helmont from the Standpoint of Locke' in *ibid*, 67-86. Both essays emphasise the group's commitment to free thinking.

¹⁶⁴ Penn's letters in the Library of the Religious Society of Friends are held in MSS. Boxes 7/1 and 7/3. Catalogue references for the letters to Furly do not exist.

¹⁶⁵ Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. letters d. 2.

¹⁶⁶ BL, MS. Add. 61281, ff.218-219, BL, MS. Add. 4743, ff.187-188 and BL, MS. Add. 4283, ff.264-6 and 267-8.

¹⁶⁷ Physician and political advisor to Duke Christian August of Sulzbach who, in the 1660s, moved in Royal Society circles in England, corresponding with Henry Oldenburg. See *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg*, ed. A. Rupert and M. Boas Hall, 13 vols. (Madison: WI: University of

his frequent diarrhoea could do him no harm. He wished, he said, to 'intreat [Locke's] judgement upon this our reasoning'.¹⁶⁸ A letter of 20 March the same year phrased his barrage of symptoms and medicaments differently, speaking of Furly's intention to 'entertain you with my own condition'.¹⁶⁹

This is typical of Furly's letters, which seem to be anxious to describe his symptoms fully and accurately in order to receive the best advice. One letter, in which Furly writes that he is 'pretty well and free from' a recent 'Cough',¹⁷⁰ follows an opening paragraph of academic gossip with a passage beginning, 'It remains now onely that I tell you how I find my self',¹⁷¹ going on to give details of Furly's medicine taking, sleeping pattern, and the progress of his cough over the past three days.¹⁷² The urge for full and accurate disclosure is powerful, as demonstrated in a postscript to a letter of 1689:

I forgot to tell you I have had to day much proneness to vomit and have in the violence of coughing vomited up my Grewel, and that I swallow with some difficulty the Lappet of my throat hanging downe – dos thy booke go on?¹⁷³

The postscript is written in a black ink rectangle on a separate page of the bifolium that Furly created to make the letter. His remark, 'I forgot to tell you', implies that his practice of giving Locke an account of his symptoms is a well established routine. But he is also comfortable with sudden switches of mode. The description of his condition is forensic, relating his symptoms ('proneness to vomit', 'coughing',

Wisconsin Press, 1965–1986), I, pp. 447.

¹⁶⁸ Bodleian Library, MS. Locke c. 9, f.61v.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, f.69v.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, f.38r.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² 'saturday all day, I tooke no medicine of any sort. Nor yet at night, to try if I could sleep without it, and so I did yesterday and this night, saturday night I slept very well, and on my right side, last night (being a little heated in the meeting, and my change of bed and beer, I was a little at first kept awake and coughed — I return today to my barly water so soone as its cleare. And doubt not of getting rid of my cough in few dayes'. Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid, f.59r.

difficulty swallowing), their duration ('to day'), and some physiological details ('the Lappet of my throat hanging downe'); and it is followed, without preamble, by an inquiry about the condition of Locke's work in progress.¹⁷⁴

Other letters confirm Furly's obsession with relating his symptoms. On 27 February 1691, he wrote twice to Locke. The first letter was short (250 words), designed, 'to let you know that my wife was God be thanked safely delivered yesterday of a daughter'.¹⁷⁵ Later, at greater leisure to write, Furly composed a thousand-word letter, the second paragraph of which began, 'Now as to myself, I continue weak, but properly I am not sick, nor have been this 6/w.'¹⁷⁶ Clues in the two letters indicate their different purposes. The first, giving the news of the birth of his child, is written on a single quarto sheet, laid out with, by Furly's standards, relative formality, observing a 2cm left-hand margin and a 1cm upper margin, into which the salutation is written. The second letter is written on two sheets folded into a bifolium, its hand more cramped than the first. Furly observes a left-hand margin on its opening page, but abandons the practice when he moves to the reverse side of the sheet. A postscript is written into the vacant marginal space. While the first letter seems designed to announce a piece of news, the second is tailored to conveying information in bulk.

That letter did not confine itself to Furly's health, sharing remarks about their mutual friend Francis Mercury Van Helmont and other members of their circle. But some letters became rhetorically overwhelmed by Furly's illness. Like Hooke and

¹⁷⁴ The 'booke' is Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, published the following year but distributed among Locke's friends during the 1680s. In 1687, Locke enclosed a manuscript copy in a letter to Edward Clarke, instructing him to pass it to the *Essay*'s dedicatee Thomas Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. by E.S. de Beer, 8 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), III, pp.321-323.

¹⁷⁵ Bodleian Library, MS. Locke c. 9, f.65r.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, f.66r.

Jeake, he was, meticulous in recording his medicine-taking and the reasons for it.

Earlier that month, he had written:

I used nothing but Tincture of Steel Laudanum and powder of red Coral – Sometimes they talkt of giving rhubarb tosted, and sometimes of giving me a Clyster; but did not. The looseness seems stopt, was so for 8 to 10 days till I eat some golden pippins which tinged (as well as any stone ever) and gave 3 stooles last tuesday, and the 2 last loose, which made me write to mr. Popple that I feared my looseness returned. But I have not had a stoole since, and been freed from Gripes¹⁷⁷

This is another closely written letter in which a good deal of information is fitted onto a single page. It is distinctly redolent of the letters of Gale and Jackson in which medicine taking was recorded in detail, with the period of relief from symptoms noted, and the stools that resulted taken account of. That Furly wrote to William Popple (Marvell's tutee and the secretary of Locke's Dry Club) about his changing health implies that his network of correspondence in illness was wider than the surviving letters, dominated by those to Locke, suggests. Though Furly's letters to Popple do not survive, evidence from his correspondence with Locke implies that he wrote to Popple's household for medicaments rather than diagnosis or advice. On 22 May 1689, he reported 'Mrs Popple has sent me some sirope of Capulare to take a spoonfull in a glass of cold spring water'.¹⁷⁸ The Popples were providers of recipes and remedies, Locke of interpretive assistance, requiring him to be furnished with complete medical information.

This process could not always be contained within the conventional lay out of Furly's letters. The following month, he sent Locke a short note announcing that he had received the last letter Locke had sent,¹⁷⁹ had taken the action that Locke requested, and that,

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, f.59r.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, f.37r.

¹⁷⁹ Locke's letter does not survive.

I have but time to let you know that with me its pretty wel, I remain very weak, but my looseness is stopt, tho I know not whether it be by the Laudanum as formerly, till I have tryed it 3 nights.¹⁸⁰

This letter, written in haste because of the carrier's need to depart,¹⁸¹ is a sparse note crammed into the upper part of a quarto page. Furly signed the note, 'Yors Bfurly' and addressed it simply, 'To mr. John Locke These'. There is no postmark or sign of sealing, implying that Furly handed the letter to the bearer without need of these formalities. Even so, he found time to include an update on his symptoms, taking care not to over-ascribe the upturn in his health to Laudanum, his experiment with that treatment being still in progress.

In recording his Laudanum-taking, Furly seems to aspire to a similar approach to his physical health and self-medicating to Hooke's. He reports taking Laudanum on 5 and 12 January 1691, as well as on 2 February, when he wrote, 'I have never abstaynd from Laudanum 3 nights together. Ile now begin and try, but if my looseness returns, I must keep that bridle over it'.¹⁸² Four days later, he wrote to Locke, describing his attempt to 'passe 3 nights without being necessitated to recur to the succours of my beloved Laudanum',¹⁸³ reporting, 'glad I was I had it to run to. This immediately stopt it, and, tho I tooke none last night, has to this houre, being about noone, that I rose to write this, but if I be incommoded while I set up, I shall use it again at night'.¹⁸⁴ Furly acknowledged that 'it alone, as you write will no more cure me, than eating and drinking will cure that disease of hunger and thirst, but that in spight of the strongest potions and fittest doses, it will after the revolution of a few houres return again'.¹⁸⁵ But he resolved to continue using it rather than the rhubarb

¹⁸⁰ Bodleian Library, MS. Locke c. 9, f.68.

¹⁸¹ 'mr. Brockman is Just going'. Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid, f.59r.

¹⁸³ Ibid, f.61r.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

that had been recommended. He deployed opinions he had previously received from Locke to co-opt the philosopher into agreement with his medical reasoning: 'Seing you confes purging with Rhubarb, in this season, very dangerous, more dangerous than to ride 30 miles a day. We think it safest way to keep the old enemy in chaines, as oft as he rebels and gets loose, so long as we have so Certain and effectual chaines to lay him in for a day 2 or 3'.¹⁸⁶ Only after establishing the argument on those terms, does Furly write 'I intreat your Judgment upon this our reasoning'.¹⁸⁷ The argument's final flourish, perhaps designed to bring Locke to his way of thinking, may have had the opposite effect:

I assure you I speak as I think, and tho when I have Laudanum in, I am mightly not onely at ease, but well pleased, for I do mighty things I make the Jacobites wise, I help the Gulonites. I break down the Tyranny in church and state, I destroy all sects from the first to the last and erect a Church universall, and so do thinges that never were done below the moone, yet of this fooles paradise I am not so fond, but I can easily quit it, if I can apprehend it to be perillous to my health, which men prefer before their wealth, as the Doctor sais in the Triple plea for the superiority.¹⁸⁸

Furly's relationship to the drug is one that later ages might label addictive. Although he recognises that the preternatural boost his confidence receives is 'a fooles paradise', his claims for the effects of Laudanum have strayed far from his forensic description of symptoms and medicine-taking. Taking up his insistence – seemingly without prompting – that 'I can easily quit it', a postscript to this letter pleads again, 'Who would not then make use of Laudanum in my case'.¹⁸⁹ He has almost developed a Laudanum-taking persona in which his arguments in favour of religious tolerance are all the more vivid and persuasive. History does not record what Locke made of Furly's reasoning, but Furly continued to use Laudanum, reporting three weeks later,

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, f.61v.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

'I dare not trust my self three nights without Laudanum, 2 days I am wel, but the third day it breaks out again',¹⁹⁰ but he also submitted to his doctors' advice and turned to rhubarb, which proved less distasteful than he feared.¹⁹¹

This behaviour demonstrates a significant difference between Furly's letters and those of Gale to Lister and Jackson to Boyle. Although Gale shared philosophical interests with Lister and both were Yorkshire residents, Furly's relationship to Locke was closer still, and his letter to the philosopher appears both to seek advice and to make a case for the outcome he favours. Whereas Gale asks Lister, 'whether you commend ye use of ym longer yn 10 dayes together', Furly's leading question to Locke is, 'Who would not then make use of Laudanum in my case, at least till the frost breaks and the weather be more moderate'.

MILTON'S LETTER TO PHILARAS

Milton's Latin letter on his blindness to Leonard Philaras of September 1654 initially displays an urgency to convey his case accurately similar to that of Lhwyd's letter to Lister. But, while Lhwyd's relationship to Lister was close, if largely professional, Milton's to the physician he consulted was far more distant. The poet's letter represents a concerted last ditch attempt to find a cure for his by-then-total blindness.¹⁹² During a visit to London, Philaras had suggested to Milton that his friend, a French physician called Thevenot,¹⁹³ might be able to help improve his

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, f.64r.

¹⁹¹ 'I have taken my Rhubarb without any aversion in the world, and do wonder that the Doctors never told me that I would take it so'. Ibid, f.66r.

¹⁹² No manuscript for this letter survives. The letter text on which subsequent versions are based is that of John Milton, *Joannis Miltonii Angli, Epistolarum Familiarium* (London: Aylmer, 1674), pp.39-42. I will refer to the text reprinted with an English translation in the Columbia edition of Milton's works.

¹⁹³ There is no Dr Thevenot in the annals of seventeenth-century medicine who fits these criteria. James Holly Hanford claims, 'The man is almost certainly Dr. Francois Thevenin, a distinguished Parisian surgeon and ophthalmologist, the exact individual to whom a well-informed continental would have referred an Englishman of that time as a final authority and last medical hope in an

apparently irretrievable condition. Milton's letter writing situation bore another difference to that of Furly or Lhwyd: he was at two further removes from his audience. His addressee was not the intended final recipient of the letter and, by now, his blindness was so developed that he required an amanuensis to take down all his writing.¹⁹⁴

Milton begins the letter with routine pleasantries directed at Philaras, before announcing that he is switching rhetorical mode to begin his case history:

As you have, therefore, suggested to me that I should not give up all hope of recovering my sight, and told me that you have a friend and close companion in the Paris physician, Thevenot, especially distinguished as an oculist, and that you will consult him about my eyes if I furnish you with means for his diagnosis of the causes and symptoms, I will do what you advise, that I may not haply seem to refuse any chance of help offered me providentially.¹⁹⁵

He then gives an apparently forensic discussion of his failing sight, beginning,

It is ten years, I think, more or less, since I felt my sight getting weak and dull, and at the same time my viscera generally out of sorts.¹⁹⁶

Even in English translation, the change in tone is noticeable. One passage is conversational, making connections between Philaras's offer to consult his friend and Milton's faith in providence, Philaras's insistence that Milton 'should not give up all hope' and Milton's mock-tolerance in taking him at his word. The next excerpt is to

apparently desperate case. This Dr. Thevenin was royal oculist at the court of Louis XIV, where Philaras was resident as an envoy from the Duke of Parma.' James Holly Hanford, 'John Milton Forswears Physic,' *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 32:1 (1944), 23-34, pp.26-27.

¹⁹⁴ Clearly, with no manuscript, the amanuensis cannot be identified. Even an educated guess is problematic. Peter Beal explains, 'the identification of Milton's many amanuenses (perhaps dozens, counting the government clerks he used in the 1650s) remains a controversial subject'. Beal, II:2: 'Milton's Amanuenses', 83-88, p.83. Beal identifies six principal amanuenses: Thomas Ellwood (1639-1713), Elizabeth Milton (1638-1727), Edward Phillips (1630-96?), John Phillips (1631-1706?), Jeremie Picard (1658-60), Cyriak Skinner (1627-1700) and Daniel Skinner (b. 1651?). John Shawcross's claims that John Phillips is the scribe of several Milton manuscripts ('Notes of Milton's Amanuenses', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 58:1, 1959, 29-38) and that a manuscript version of Sonnet XIV and two manuscript letters share a common writer ('What We Can Learn from Milton's Spelling', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 26:4 (1963), 351-361), are, Beal advises, misleading. Beal, II:2, pp.85 and 86.

¹⁹⁵ John Milton, *The Works of John Milton*, ed. F.A. Patterson et al. 18 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1938), XII, p.67.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

the point and informative: where Milton is unsure of his details he acknowledges it, and, where he has it at his disposal, he uses clinical terminology. Though 'viscera' is a vague-sounding term, Milton's Latin phrase is '*lienem, visceraque omnia gravari, flatibusque vexari*',¹⁹⁷ literally, "the spleen and all things weighed down on entrails troubled with gas". At the same time that he noticed his sight failing, Milton also began suffering from a gastric or intestinal disorder, and he takes pains to note the fact for his physician.

To begin with Milton makes a concerted effort at conveying his case history plainly and accurately, explaining:

In the morning, if I began, as usual, to read anything, I felt my eyes at once thoroughly pained, and shrinking from the act of reading, but refreshed after moderate bodily exercise. If I looked at a lit candle, a kind of iris seemed to snatch it from me. Not very long after, a darkness clouded over the left part of my left eye (for that eye became clouded some years before the other) removed from my vision all objects situated on that side. Objects in front of me also, if I chanced to close the right eye, seemed smaller. The other eye also failing perceptibly and gradually through a period of three years, I observed, some months before my sight was wholly gone, that objects I looked at without myself moving seemed all to swim, now to the right, now to the left.¹⁹⁸

A further difficulty is that Milton is required to remember and recount his symptoms over a decade, and he makes a bold attempt at cataloguing and describing their progress. He made a good enough job of it (and his translators a close enough rendering) that the letter stands up to diagnostic scrutiny by twenty-first-century physicians. I showed it to Dr John Salmon, a Consultant Ophthalmologist at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, who suggested that Milton's observation, on looking at a lighted candle, that 'a kind of iris seemed to snatch it from me' 'is always a symptom of corneal edema',¹⁹⁹ which is probably suggestive of raised intraocular

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p.66.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, pp.67-69.

¹⁹⁹ Letter to the author.

pressure, a diagnosis confirmed by Milton's experience of 'a kind of sleepy heaviness'.²⁰⁰ That Milton's left eye became blind before the right, Dr Salmon explains, supports the case for raised intraocular pressure. That the symptoms led to blindness indicates progressive damage to the optic nerves, 'a common late consequence of raised intraocular pressure, and typical of glaucoma'. 'The most likely cause of his blindness', Dr Salmon reports, 'is secondary glaucoma, rather than primary glaucoma'. He identifies three possible causes of this: pigment dispersion syndrome (which would have required Milton to be short-sighted), pseudoexfoliation syndrome (which would have required a family history of blindness), and acute iritis ('which is often associated with systemic diseases').

But even in this passage, which bears diagnostic scrutiny, the Latin vocabulary still hints at an attempt by Milton to render his illness as a metaphorical battle. The word his twentieth-century editors translated as 'shrinking from' is '*refugere*',²⁰¹ more commonly translated as "fleeing", "running away" or "escaping". And they decline to translate his word *recreari* which Milton uses to describe the appearance of colours around a lit candle when he looked directly at it. The verb means literally, "to encircle with a garland", a term which does not resound with empirical precision, but perhaps hints at martial victory: if the candlelight is garlanded, is it possible to infer from Milton's description a triumph of light over darkness? His contrast between that suggestion, in one sentence, and (on a literal translation) "the left hand part of the left eye being clouded by a mist which saved all things [from my sight]", in the next, helps support this interpretation. Milton's verb is *ēripere*, which means both "to rescue" and "to snatch away", lending weight to an

²⁰⁰ Milton, *Works*, XII, p.869.

²⁰¹ Ibid, p.66.

argument for Milton's deploying military terminology to make an embedded claim for some sort of heroism in blindness.

Without transitional niceties, Milton switches from detached analysis into a new rhetorical mode:

Inveterate mists now seem to have settled in my forehead and temples,
which weigh me down and depress me with a kind of sleepy heaviness,
especially from meal-time to evening; so that not seldom there comes into
my mind the description of the Salmydessian seer Phineus in the
Argonautics:

All round him then there grew
A purple thickness; and he thought the Earth
Whirling beneath his feet, and so he sank,
Speechless at length, into a feeble sleep.²⁰²

Although Milton's translators differ over the early part of this passage,²⁰³ they agree that his grammar, as it moves towards the quotation, implies that his illness prompts his frequent recourse to Apollinus Rhodius's *Argonautica* ('so that not seldom there comes into my mind', or, in the Latin, '*ut mihi haud raro veniat in mentem*'). Blindness compels Milton to rehearse one of the Classical precedents for his disease. That Milton aligns himself with Phineus – especially that he does so in a letter seeking direct medical counsel – is significant. Phineus is a former king who 'above all men endured most bitter woes because of the gift of prophecy'.²⁰⁴ Ultimately, he was condemned to 'a lingering old age' by Zeus, who blinded him, taking 'from his eyes the pleasant light'.²⁰⁵ Milton aligning himself with Phineus, then, makes both an act of self-deprecation and one of self-aggrandisement. He both condemns himself to lingering old age and makes a claim to prophetic insight. The Columbia translators

²⁰² Ibid, p.69.

²⁰³ The Columbia *Works* translates '*tempora inveterati quidam vapores videntur insedisse*' as 'Inveterate mists now seem to have settled...'. The Yale edition has, 'Soon a mist appearing [...] removed from my sight everything'. John Milton, *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolf, 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-1982), V:II, p.869.

²⁰⁴ *The Argonautica*, trans. R.C. Seaton (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), p.115.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

convey a further pun on Milton, choosing the word 'seer' for the Latin '*Vatis*', generally interpreted as either "prophet / soothsayer" or "poet". In the seventeenth century, this figure was commonly associated with women, but the model remained of an empty vessel, receiving prophesy free from sensory distractions, as Arise Evan's account of the seer Elinor Channel expressed: 'when she is dumb, all her senses are taken up, and then the matter which troubles her mind, is dictated and made plain to her by the spirit of God'.²⁰⁶

Milton's quotation from Rhodius, though relevant, describes the experience of falling into a prophetic (or rhapsodic, in the poetic sense) trance in more elaborate terms than the letter's opening accounts of his symptoms have accustomed the reader to. It gives a resonant account of drowsiness, though the description of 'the earth whirling beneath his feet' is perhaps ambiguous for a physician's diagnostic purposes. There might be another rhetorical reason for Milton's inserting the quotation into his letter. His ready ability to disgorge the passage gives a practical demonstration of his claim to bear comparison to Phineus. A clue can be found in the line in the *Argonautica* which immediately follows the quotation he gives: 'But when they saw him they gathered round and marvelled'.²⁰⁷ Like the rhapsodes of fourth-century Athens, Milton recites passages of classical literature from memory, and the trance-like state he describes in this passage is not dissimilar to that achieved by rhapsodes to declaim passages from Homer and Hesiod.²⁰⁸ If Milton's behaviour here is

²⁰⁶ Elinor Channel, *A Message from God by a Dumb Woman to His Highness the Lord Protector*, ed. Arise Evans, (London: s.n., 1653), p.7.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p.117.

²⁰⁸ For an account of rhapsodic practice in Classical Greece, see Barbara Graziosi, *Inventing Homer: The Early Reception of Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.21-40. Graziosi says, 'While modern editors often classify as 'rhapsodes' the composers of the *Homeric Hymns* and other hexameter texts, such as the lines found in the *Certamen* and the *Lives of Homer*, in the ancient sources, such lines are ascribed to Homer or Hesiod, and the rhapsodes are depicted as performers only'. p.34.

typological, is it so on classical rather than biblical terms.

Though Milton attempts to return from the quotation to the more straightforward forensic tone in which he began, his descriptions slide naturally into a more self-reflexive mode. Accounting for his present blindness, he finds himself torn between description and interpretation:

but that now, as if the sense of lucency were extinct, it is a mere blackness, or a blackness dashed, and as it were inwoven with an ashy grey, that is wont to pour itself forth. Yet the darkness which is perpetually before me, by night as well as by day, seems always nearer to a whitish than to a blackish, and such that, when the eye rolls itself, there is admitted, as through a small chink, a certain little trifle of light.²⁰⁹

Again, the Columbia translation seems not quite to do the specifics of Milton's terminology justice. Where that edition gives 'the darkness which is perpetually before me', Milton's Latin has the word '*Caligo*' - "mist or fog".²¹⁰ As he has said, his blindness was not black but white, but the point stands. Staying with the Columbia translation, there is a seeming contradiction between 'a mere blackness, or a blackness dashed, and as it were inwoven with an ashy grey', and 'always nearer to a whitish than to a blackish'. In the Latin, Milton does not repeat the term blackness (*nigror*) as his translators have him do, but it is present still, and stands in contrast to his claim that his blindness seems 'nearer to a whitish than to a blackish' ('*albenti semper quam nigricanti propior videtur*'). It is possible in this passage to hear an echo of Milton's poetical writings, not least *Paradise Lost*'s much-dwelt-on phrase, 'darkness visible',²¹¹ but also, *Samson Agonistes*:

O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse
Without all hope of day²¹²

²⁰⁹ Milton, *Works*, XII, p.69.

²¹⁰ Yale Prose has 'The mist which always hovers before my eyes...' IV:II, p.869.

²¹¹ *Paradise Lost*, p.4.

²¹² Milton, *Works*, I:II, pp.339-340.

But Milton cannot be seen to be so anguished in a letter to dual addressees, one of whom he has met only once and one he has never met. Soon after, he adds, 'what ever ray of hope also there may be for me from your famous physician, all the same, as in a case quite incurable, I prepare and compose myself accordingly'.²¹³ The letter, which began as a plea for medical assistance, seems to have developed into a working out of Milton's blindness. It begins with a small suggestions of heroism embedded in his vocabulary, which develops into a full-blown case for the classical precedents of his disease, and resolves into acceptance of its inevitability. The letter was written for an audience whose expectations he could not judge and whose reactions he could not anticipate. It was addressed to a friend but written for a stranger, and it demanded a forensic attention to detail in order to be successful, while at the same time the likelihood of success seemed so remote that Milton can hardly have been expected not to build in some rhetorical insurance by reference to the classical types prefiguring his blindness.

²¹³ Ibid, XII, p.71.

4.

POETRY

I want to examine both verse written by sick authors responding to sickness, and examples of patients collecting verse in commonplace books, miscellanies and personal memoirs.

Drawing on Arthur Marotti's research, Ted-Larry Pebworth has argued that, while coterie poetry such as that of Donne is inherently performative, 'the word "performance" applied to coterie poetry does not necessarily entail an oral presentation'. Rather, in Pebworth's use, the term indicates, 'any unenduring presentation of a text to a necessarily restricted audience'.¹ He offers several examples of such performances: 'Writing a verse letter to a friend is a performance, as is taking part in a poetic contest among members of a coterie and even, for example, composing a love elegy, satirizing those apathetic toward the search for religious truth, exploring the claims of neoplatonism in love, or consoling a lover with a valediction forbidding mourning'.² Pebworth's conclusion is that, 'To view poetry as "occasional" in this sense, as performance, can be to view it as essentially ephemeral: once the occasion has passed, once the poetic gesture has been made and received, the poem commemorating it ceases to have its primary excuse for existence and so is expendable'.³

In this chapter, I suggest that part of this argument holds good for the

¹ Ted-Larry Pebworth, 'John Donne, Coterie Poetry, and the Text as Performance', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 29:1 (1989), 61-75, pp.64-65.

² Ibid, p.65.

³ Ibid.

seventeenth-century poetry of illness. Inscribing a poem that addresses illness in a commonplace book (or other kind of notebook), an autobiographical text, or a personal verse collection, I argue, might constitute a performance (albeit a private one) along the lines Pebworth describes, but, in the case of illness-poems treated in such a manner, an assumption of the work's ephemerality cannot always be made. On the contrary, writing such poems into personal notebooks may constitute a performance made on the occasion of illness and never afterwards revisited, but it might just as easily be an inaugural performative act, designed to encourage further performances through reading or memorising the poem at times of future illness.⁴

Marotti's research demonstrates the lack of control exerted by authors over works that circulated in manuscript. 'In the system of manuscript transmission', he argues, 'it was normal for lyrics to elicit revisions, corrections, supplements, and answers, for they were part of an ongoing social discourse. In this environment texts were inherently malleable, escaping authorial control to enter a social world in which recipients both consciously and unconsciously altered what they received'.⁵ Moved beyond the editorial reach of their authors into circulating verse collections and personal notebooks, poems in these contexts become objects of uncertain ownership, and individual works often appear in widely varying forms. As well as the introduction of variations in spelling, diction and format into personal notebooks, sometimes titles were adapted, changed, or discarded, and texts could be cut, reordered, or presented in excerpts to suit the purpose and resources of the notebook's owner.

⁴ Richard Yeo, 'Notebooks as Memory Aids: Precepts and Practices in Early Modern England', *Memory Studies*, 1:1 (2008), 115-36, argues that commonplace books were frequently compiled as aide-mémoires rather than authoritative versions of the texts they recorded.

⁵ Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p.135.

I will begin by examining examples of poems describing personal illness inscribed in commonplace books and other types of personal note-keeping.⁶ In particular I will trace the appearances of two poems – Henry Wotton's 'Hymn to My God in a Night of my Late Sickness' and Edward Lapworth's poem written 'On his Death Bed' – through versions in commonplace books, verse miscellanies and personal papers, after which I will turn to the extensive commonplace book of Gilbert Frevile. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Earl Havens says, commonplace books had come to be 'widely understood to be part of a long-standing tradition that stemmed from the rhetorical and philosophical theories of the ancient authorities, from the recommendations of the most celebrated Renaissance humanists, and from personal exposure to the commonplace book in grammar schools and universities'.⁷ He also shows, however, that manuscript commonplace books especially 'appear highly idiosyncratic to us now, each accustomed in its own unique way to the mental habits and intellectual interests of its compiler'.⁸ A picture begins to emerge of the ways in which commonplace note-keeping might have been used autobiographically: 'Despite the formal theories and recommendations of Aristotle, Cicero, Erasmus, Locke, and others, the personal act of compiling texts and quotations in manuscript collections has occurred, for the most part, according to the

⁶ The extent to which personal notebooks and verse miscellanies can be considered commonplace books, is not easily judged. Formal criteria for recording quotations under organised headings seem to be the hallmark of commonplace books, but such texts are seldom methodologically consistent. Mary Thomas Crane explains, 'The practice of collecting poems in a notebook is related to, but in some ways different from, the collection of sayings. Notebooks exist that contain sayings and abstracts alone [...]. There are others that contain a mixture of sayings and poems [...]. Courtly miscellanies seem at least partly designed to display the owner's participation in the courtly pastime of writing, exchanging, and collecting love lyrics'. In some cases, she acknowledges, 'this is mixed in with the gathering of aphoristic matter'. Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp.250-251n.72.

⁷ Earl Havens, *Commonplace Books: A History of Manuscripts and Printed Books from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Beinecke, 2001), p.72.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.65.

practical uses to which they were put by their compilers'.⁹ Smyth brings out the autobiographical quality of commonplace books with even greater clarity. On his account, the relationship between commonplace book and the compiler's life is 'doubly retrospective: the manuscript describes the compiler's life, and it does so by looking back to precedents'.¹⁰ But, more than that, commonplace books also contain proleptic notes designed to be of use for future lives: 'compilers gathered aphoristic wisdom in order to shape (that is, influence or guide) the life of future readers' and, what is more, the reader's life would be shaped according to the same typological models that the compiler had deployed in building up a store of precedents to account for his or her own life'.¹¹

After commonplace books and personal notebooks, I will turn to original poems written at times of illness and, initially, to examples of those appearing in forms of memoir and spiritual autobiography written by women. I will begin by examining Alatheia Bethell's book of verse and meditative writing, which contains a set of reflections on sickness as well as a good deal of material collected from John Patrick's psalm translations. In Bethell's case, I will examine the ways in which she adapts Patrick to create a new composite psalm text, as well as the relationship between her meditative and verse writing, attempting to show the practical and performative uses that Bethell put her book to in illness. Then, I will turn to the substantial notebook of Elizabeth Freke, which catalogues her significant collection of household medicines and recipes, and contains a prose memoir entitled, 'Remembrances of my Misfortuns haue Attended me In my unhappy life'. Freke includes three pages of meditative verse in the middle of her memoir, and I will

⁹ Ibid, p.66.

¹⁰ Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, p.149.

¹¹ Ibid.

reflect upon the relationship of these verses to the memoir and the relationship of the spiritual healing afforded by Freke's poetic devotions to the physical healing offered by her medicine collecting. Next, I will examine Katherine Austen's 'Book M', a volume containing meditative writing, autobiographical material and commonplace-style notes, observing the ways in which Austen composes poems drawing on the psalms and original verse based on her life experiences. In the case of sickness, verse appears to afford Austen a meditative outlet for spiritual rumination on the experiences she gives account of in prose.

To this point my focus will have been on poetry collected by readers or written as an accompaniment to religious meditation or self-reflection. Several seventeenth-century poets, however, composed original, stand-alone works of poetry on the theme of personal sickness, and appeared to regard the process of verse-writing as in some way curative. The Presbyterian minister Nicholas Billingsley dedicated himself, during a debilitating fit of illness, to composing his *Brachymartyrologia*, while his *Kosmobrephia*, he said, was written 'to rouse my selfe out of my dampish malencholy'.¹² Similarly, An Collins, suffering an apparently chronic and disabling condition, wrote poetry as part of her meditative practice and, when she experienced physical discomfort, 'Immediately distempers to prevent, / I cald to mind how all things ordered bee'.¹³ Hester Pulter, meanwhile, specifically identified several of her poems as having been 'Made when I was not well',¹⁴ including one visionary account of a transformative journey around the solar system.

I will bring together my discussions of poetry collection and composition, by turning to Donne's 'Hymne To God, my God in my Sicknes', a performative poem

¹² Nicholas Billingsley, *KOΣMOBPEΦIA, or The Infancy of the World* (London: Crofts, 1658), sig.A4v. For ease of reading, I will give the title as *Kosmobrephia*.

¹³ An Collins, *Divine Songs and Meditations Composed by An Collins* (London: Bishop, 1653), p.7.

¹⁴ University of Leeds Library, Brotherton MS. Lt q 32, f.73v.

with restricted circulation. I will introduce the five known manuscript versions of that poem (only one of which appears in a major manuscript collection of Donne's verse), after which I will contrast the manuscript circulation of the 'Hymne' to the distribution of the Holy Sonnets, showing the drastically limited exposure Donne's 'Hymne' was given. In the case of the 'Hymne' and much of the other material that will appear, I will be dealing less with descriptions of symptoms and medication and more with types of writing and reading constituted by prescribed behaviour at times of illness. In particular, I will present a good deal of material that takes sickness as a prompt to search for patience to bear divine correction quietly, or to seek what one spiritual handbook called a *Waye of Dyenge Well*.¹⁵

COMMONPLACE BOOKS, MISCELLANIES, AND PERSONAL NOTEBOOKS

The ways in which seventeenth-century verse about illness was written into notebooks were multiple. Here I want only to give a few examples of the poetry of ill-health as it was presented and adapted in such books.

i. HENRY WOTTON'S HYMN IN A NIGHT OF SICKNESS

The British Library's MS. Add. 74231 is a small, vellum-bound notebook in landscape orientation, formerly belonging to Matthias Lynen, a theologian living in Germany and Switzerland during the middle part of the seventeenth century. The volume contains commonplaces on various subjects mixed in with notes on theology (principally that of Calvin), English history, anthropological subjects including the marital customs of Assyrian Christians, and practical information including

¹⁵ Thomas Lupset, *A Compendious and a Very Fruteful Treatyse, Teachyng the Waye of Dyenge Well* (London: Berthelet, 1534).

instructions for ink-making and engraving knife-blades. In the second part of the notebook, Lynen departs from these conventional uses, converting his text into an *album amicorum*, described in document by the historian Lionel Cecil Jane that is stored with the manuscript as 'a species of autograph book'.¹⁶ Here, the coats of arms of Lynen's friends are painted along with illustrations, endorsements and quotations in hands other than Lynen's.

In among these contents, Lynen has written two poems by Henry Wotton, the first, 'A Hymn to My God in a Night of my Late Sickness' and the second, 'Tears wept at the Grave of Sir Albertus Morton'. Neither poem was printed during Wotton's lifetime, both appearing in Izaak Walton's 1651 biography, *Reliquiae Wottonianae*. Wotton apparently sent the 'Hymn to My God' to Walton, enclosed in a letter explaining the illness it addresses, which was also printed in the biography. Wotton reports, 'I have been confined to my chamber by a quotidian Fever, I thank God more of contumacie then malignitie'. After an intermission, the fever returned 'with a surcrew of those splenetick vapors that are call'd *Hypocondriacal*'.¹⁷ Textually, neither the 'Hymn' nor 'Tears Wept' as each appears in Lynen's book differs much from Walton's version, though it is possible that Lynen had access to the poem through its manuscript circulation in the two decades before Walton's publication.¹⁸ Appendix II gives the Walton and Lynen texts of the poem, as well as that of a verse miscellany held in the Bodleian Library to which I will come shortly. Whatever his

¹⁶ Lionel Cecil Jane, 'Notes on a Manuscript Book at Dolphinton', stored with BL, MS. Add. 74231.

¹⁷ Henry Wotton, *Reliquiae Wottonianae*, ed. Izaak Walton (London: Maxey, 1651), p.513. The 'Hymn to My God in a Night of my Late Sickness' is printed in *ibid*, p.515.

¹⁸ Peter Beal identifies seven further manuscript versions of the poem circulating between the 1630s and the early eighteenth century. Two of these appear to be later versions, transcribed from *Reliquiae Wottonianae*, but five are from verse miscellanies dating from the first half of the seventeenth century. These are Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 38, f.132. Bodleian Library MS. Rawl poet. 147, f.101. Bodleian Library, MS. Tanner 466, f.41, Bodleian Library, MS. Tanner 466, f.4v, and Yale, Osborn Collection b 63, p.115. Beal, I:II, pp.568-569.

source, Lynen's version of the sickness poem has one significant difference to Walton's: the title in Walton's version is as I have given it at the beginning of this paragraph. In Lynen's book, the poem is simply entitled 'A Hymn of Sr Hen. Wotton'.

Perhaps Lynen's source was one of the poem's manuscript versions, and he did not have available to him the biographical detail given by *Reliquiae Wottonianæ*'s title; perhaps Walton was his source and Lynen chose to write the sickness and its circumstances out of his text. In either case, a clue to the way in which the book was used lies in another of its entries. Some fifty pages after the Wotton poems, a collection of aphorisms on death appears, taken from a set of meditations in the younger Henry Vane's posthumously published account of the trial proceedings that lead to his execution.¹⁹ Lynen excerpts key phrases from Vane's text in a clear, italic hand. He reads both Vane's 'Meditations on Death' and 'Meditations concerning Man's Life, &c. Penned by this Sufferer in his Prison State', noting significant quotations in the order in which they appear in Vane's text (although he includes notes from the 'Meditations on Death' before those from the 'Meditations concerning Man's Life', a reversal of the order in which they are printed). The purpose of the entries seems to be to digest Vane's text, perhaps as an aide-mémoire to its main claims, perhaps as exemplars of fortitude at the moment of death.²⁰

These notes provide a context for reading the two Wotton poems that Lynen records. Wotton's 'Hymn' makes a plea for similar piety and courage in sickness as

¹⁹ Lynen's meditations from Vane appear in BL, MS. Add. 74231, ff.86r-87r. His sources were 'Meditations on Death' in Henry Vane, *The Tryal of Sir Henry Vane, Kt* (London: s.n., 1662), pp.126-131, and 'Meditations concerning Man's Life, &c. Penned by this Sufferer in his Prison State'. Ibid, pp.121-122.

²⁰ Vane was known for such fortitude, writing, 'if by my being offered up, the Faith of many be confirmed, and others convinced and brought to the knowledge of the Truth, how can I desire greater honour and matter of rejoycing?' Ibid, p.80. George Sikes wrote at Vane's execution, 'He did look Death in the face with a true chearful boldness, not in a transport, or dissembled courage, (as is usual) but in a fixed composure and full vigor of all his natural senses'. George Sikes, *The Life and Death of Sir Henry Vane, Kt* (London: s.n., 1662), p.119.

Vane is reported to have shown in death. Its final stanza makes an explicit call for such resolve, building on Christ's final words on crucifixion, *consummatum est*:

And said by him that said no more,
But seal'd it with his sacred breath
Thou then, that hast dispung'd my score
And dying, wast the Death of death;
Be to me now, on thee i call,
My life, my strength, my joy, my all.²¹

Read in conjunction with the material from Vane's *Tryal*, the poem begins to seem like a prompt for devotional behaviour in illness, offering a reminder of the necessity of turning to Christ and making a plea for assistance. Vane's aphorisms offer philosophical comfort in dying – 'A good death honoures a mans whole life' / 'The way to feare nothing is to Livue well' / 'Things Certaine should not be feared but Expected'.²² Wotton's poem meanwhile offers a practical model which could assist Lynen, when sick and dying, in applying those points of philosophy to his situation.

Wotton's 'Hymn' also appears, with six of his other poems, in a miscellany held in the Bodleian Library, compiled in the 1640s by Henry Some of Cambridge.²³ The manuscript, cramped and not written in a fair hand, appears to have been designed for Some's personal use rather than for further circulation. In this version, the 'Hymn' bears an interesting textual difference to the *Reliquiae Wottonianae* text, one it shares with some of the poem's other manuscript copies. In Walton's compilation and Lynen's commonplace book, the 'Hymn' is presented as a direct personal statement (its first line is 'Oh thou great Power! in whom I move'). However, the versions in the Bodleian's Rawlinson, Tanner and Ashmole manuscript

²¹ BL, MS. Add. 74231, f.35v.

²² Ibid, ff.86r-v.

²³ MS. Rawl. poet. 147, f.101. The other manuscripts six Wotton poems are 'An Ode to the King at his Returning from Scotland', 'On a Bank as I sat a-Fishing', 'A Poem Written by Sir Henry Wotton in his Youth', 'Tears at the Grave of Sir Albertus Morton', 'To a Noble Friend in his Sickness' and 'Upon the Sudden Restraint of the Earl of Somerset'. For Some, see *Alum. Cant.*, IV, p.119.

collections, in places, use plural rather than singular pronouns: their first lines read 'Oh thou great power in whom wee move', while the last line in those versions speaks of 'Our life, our Strength, our Joy, our All'.²⁴

In every surviving version, the poem's title styles it as a 'Hymn' of one kind or another. All transcribers appear to agree that the poem grows out of a tradition of verse with a performative, devotional purpose. While the Bodleian miscellanies are born from a tradition of verse sharing which collectivises the performative act of devotion that the poem recommends, Walton's biography and Lynen's commonplace book – born from an ambition to celebrate a life and to digest personal reading as a model for conduct – individualise it. But the distinction between collective and individual prayer is not consistently sharp. The Bodleian texts do not obliterate the singular pronoun altogether: the Rawlinson version still asks God, 'behold me through thy beams of Love' and, in expressing the poet's Protestant assumption of salvation by faith rather than by works, professes, 'No hallowed Oyls, no grains I need'. There is nothing unconventional in Protestant poetry conflating the assumption of God acting on humankind as a whole with individual expressions of piety and requests for personalised treatment by God. Indeed, such fluctuating behaviour between universal and particular understandings of God finds an analogy in the verse miscellany itself, in which verse circulating among a wider social circle is often distilled into private collections for personal use.

ii. EDWARD LAPWORTH'S DEATHBED VERSES

As well as containing a version of Donne's 'Hymne to God, my God in My Sicknes',

²⁴ A later version, in a miscellany belonging to the antiquary Marmaduke Rawden, follows *Reliquiae Wottonianæ*'s pronoun use. See BL, MS. Add. 18044, ff.147v-148r.

which I will discuss later in this chapter, the papers of Julius Caesar, the lawyer who held the positions of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Master of the Rolls, contain a sickness poem by the Oxford physician Edward Lapworth. In this version, the poem is titled, 'Verses Written by Dctr Latworth in an Extreimity of Sicknes wch he suffered'.²⁵ Though not printed during the seventeenth century, Lapworth's poem had some circulation in manuscript, appearing in miscellanies in the Bodleian and British Libraries, in which versions it is titled, 'Dr Latworth on his death bedd'.²⁶ I give the texts of the poem's four known manuscript versions in Appendix III.

The Bodleian's Ashmole MS. 781 is a quarto-sized commonplace book,²⁷ most famous for containing one of Donne's sermons, written in a secretary hand.²⁸ The rest of the manuscript, which is in a different hand, contains copies of various letters and state papers (notably Raleigh's letters to the King and to his wife written before his execution), as well as verse by a number of poets including Raleigh, Elizabeth I, Francis Beaumont, James Harrington and John Hoskins. The British Library's MS. Stowe 962 is a similar text: a quarto verse miscellany in which several hands figure but one secretary hand dominates. Among the poets included in the text is Donne (who also dominates, represented by ninety one poems and the *Paradoxes and Problems*), along with Beaumont, Fletcher, Raleigh, Ben Jonson, Thomas Carew and, again, John Hoskins.

Caesar's text is different from the other two, being a copy on a single folio-

²⁵ BL. MS. Add. 34324, ff.306r. For Lapworth, see *Alum. Oxon.* III, p.882, and Thomas Guidott, *A Collection of Treatises Relating to the City and Waters of Bath* (London: Leake, 1725), pp.213-214.

²⁶ Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 718, f.137 and BL, MS. Stowe 962, ff.56v-57r. The title I give here is Stowe's; Ashmole has 'Dr. Latworth on his deathbed'.

²⁷ The manuscript's acidic ink has badly corroded the pages. To help prevent further damage, it has been disbound, and the pages stored in melinex sleeves. A photographic facsimile is available.

²⁸ The Lincoln's Inn *Sermon of Valediction* on Ecclesiastes 12:1 (Remember now thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth), printed in *XXVI Sermons* (London: Newcomb, 1661), pp.269-281.

sized sheet among his papers, now part of the collection bound together as BL, MS. Add. 34324. The sheet has been folded in two, with the poem appearing on the first recto page of the resulting bifolium. The hand is not Caesar's but a clear script of large italic characters that appears elsewhere among his papers. He has, however, added an endorsement: 'D Latworth verses at the time of approaching death'. Beneath that, in a lighter ink, Caesar has added 'in the Cadez voyage A chaplen to the Hon E. of Essex an. 1596', although there is no evidence of Lapworth having been acquainted with Essex. The paper shows signs of having been folded laterally into quarters and then in half again, leaving a folded paper measuring 6cm by 5cm, which would be consistent with the poem having been enclosed in a letter, although it might simply indicate that, for a time, the page was stored that way.

The title of the poem in the Caesar papers – 'Verses Written by Dctr Latworth in an Extreimity of Sicknes wch he suffered' – insists on the work as a poem of illness rather than generically one making preparations for death. And, if these several sheets can be regarded as forming some kind of integral collection, the presence of Caesar's copy of Donne's 'Hymne to God, my God in my Sicknes', five items later, implies that the two sickness poems might have been deliberately filed close to one another.²⁹ Although each of the three texts has its peculiarities, Caesar's contains the greatest number. Where both Ashmole and Stowe speak of 'my god that holdes my spiritt debtor in durance',³⁰ Caesar gives the line different emphasis: 'Thou that dost hold this Debtors spyrite in Durance'. In the two miscellanies' reading, the

²⁹ Bound into the volume between the Lapworth and Donne poem are a Latin paeon to Caesar attributed, by Caesar's endorsement, to William Ravenscroft (BL MS. Add. 34324, f.308r), two copies of a poem beginning 'What sodaine change hath darkt of late' (ibid, ff.310r and 312r-v), another poem on the same theme (ibid, f.313r) and another Latin poem, inscribed by Caesar, 'St Barnabus Jo Owne & Sr Wil Ravenscrofts Verses. Brought me by W.R. 9 April. 1623 transcribed into books'. Ibid, ff.314r-315v.

³⁰ This is Stowe's version; Ashmole has 'My God that holdes my spirit deptor in durance'.

speaker's spirit is treated as a debtor and held in durance by God, while, in Caesar's, it is the speaker that is the debtor whose spirit is therefore held in durance. It is a nuanced difference, but nonetheless one that might give rise to various interpretations with relevance for the poem's status as deathbed verses written in sickness. The miscellanies treat the speaker's spirit metaphorically as a debtor, while Caesar's reading describes the speaker's indebted situation for which the spirit is punished. (Of course, in all cases, the language of financial-accounting, familiar to diaristic and autobiographical descriptions of illness, is invoked).

Caesar's version, then, appears to present a slightly more corporeal account of the deathbed experience than the miscellanies' more spiritual reflections. Further evidence for the immediate urgency of the Caesar text can be seen in that version's assertion of its claims in the present tense, rather than Stowe and Ashmole's use of the future. Where Caesar gives, 'Fayth doth a vowe clayme by Appropriation', Stowe has 'fayth shall grant clayme by appropriation' and, where Caesar has 'O of them endles Mercye nowe enlarge me', Stowe gives, 'deare for thy mercie soone inlarge me'. The distinction is underlined by the importance Caesar's title attaches to the poem having been written in 'an Extreimity of Sicknes'. In another variation, the miscellanies give, 'I hold this life & lifes delight in loathing',³¹ while Caesar has, 'I hould this worlde, and worlds delay in Loathing', an expression that perhaps gives higher privilege to the physicality of that which is given up in dying.

But the Ashmole version – consciously or not – emphasises sickness in another more obvious way. In that version, the third and fourth stanzas are reversed, meaning that the stanza presenting a series of rhetorical questions addressed to earth, friends, life, death, flesh and sickness that the Stowe and Caesar texts have as the

³¹ Stowe. In Ashmole, the line is, 'I hold this life and lives delight in loathing'.

penultimate stanza, in Ashmole, closes the poem. That version's final couplet, therefore, is:

Flesh what art thou? a loose untemperd Morter
And sickness what art thou? Heavens churlish Porter.

These lines, which, in Stowe and Caesar, guide the reader into the following stanza, in Ashmole, are offered as its concluding reflections. Whereas Caesar made a nuanced set of textual decisions that appeared to emphasise the distinction between worldly and spiritual experiences, Ashmole draws attention to that distinction by arranging the poem in such a way that it builds to a dismissal of sickness as a tedious but necessary transitional phase in the journey towards salvation. In both cases, the text is adapted not by its author but by a particular reader, with these effects for meditating on illness the result of that adaptation.

iii. GILBERT FREVILLE'S COMMONPLACE BOOK

Another manuscript version of Lapworth's poem is to be found in the commonplace book of the Durham gentleman Gilbert Frevile.³² Frevile's folio-sized book contains extensive notes on Puritan preachers and sermons, among other theological commentaries, as well as historical and devotional notes. Although the volume has a modern binding, Frevile's original vellum cover survives; it is faded, but the name Gilbert Frevile in calligraphic, gothic characters can be discerned. The book is written from both ends in a neat sixteenth-century hand of small, consistent characters.

The majority of the book's contents are sermon notes. It opens with a

³² Little is known about Frevile. He was related to George Frevile (1536-1619), MP for Appleby in Cumbria, and he is mentioned as the father of John Frevile who entered St John's, Cambridge in 1640. *Alum. Cant.* II, p.180. His will, dated 16 February 1652, is in the National Archives, PROB/11/220.

collection of historical material, including a roll call of English noblemen since the Norman conquest, an essay of praise to Elizabeth I, ending with her epitaph, a copy of her speech to her last parliament, and a set of dedicatory verses to the Queen. After those, and a page of 'Considerations proposed unto suche as are not well affected to Religion', Frevile sets himself earnestly to recording sermon notes, which occupy his next fifty pages. The sermons he records show a slight tendency towards non-conformity. Stephen Egerton, the non-conformist parish lecturer of St Ann Blackfriars, is represented by twenty-eight sermons, occupying the first twelve pages of Frevile's notes. Other preachers represented are Thomas Barber,³³ William Charke,³⁴ Peter Lily,³⁵ Richard Stock (the minister at All Hallows, Bread Street who baptised Milton)³⁶ and Thomas Westfield.³⁷ The sermons follow one after another, each headed by its text, with a line drawn across the page to separate each new entry from the last. After these items, Frevile returns to an assemblage of historical notes and other material, including entries from almanacs. Before returning to sermon note-keeping, Frevile also records a few pages of 'godly meditations',³⁸ which include a number of short prayers for use on particular occasions. A page of prayers to be said by and for the sick figures among that material.

Some parts of Frevile's book were evidently designed to be turned to at times

³³ Fellow of St John's, Cambridge, ordained deacon at Ely in 1565. See *Alum. Cant.* I, p.82.

³⁴ Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge, expelled in 1572 for claiming episcopal church government had been introduced by Satan. He came into public dispute with the Jesuit Edward Campion. Afterwards a preacher at Lincoln's Inn. See *ibid.*, p.324, Benjamin Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*, 3 vols. (London: Black, 1813), pp.113-117, and William Charke, *An Answer to a Seditious Pamphlet lately cast Abroade by a Iesuite* (London: Barker, 1650).

³⁵ London priest with parishes at St Nicholas Olave, Fulham and Hornsey, prebend at St Paul's. Afterwards archdeacon of Taunton. See *Alum. Cant.* III, p.85.

³⁶ For an account of Stock, defining his theology as 'conformable Puritanism' (characterised by anti-papist rhetoric and fidelity to the Church of England), see Jeffrey Allan Miller, 'Milton and the Conformable Puritanism of Richard Stock and Thomas Young', in Edward Jones, ed., *Young Milton: The Emerging Author, 1620-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 72-106, pp.75-82.

³⁷ Church of England clergyman and Bishop of Bristol. See *Alum. Cant.* IV, p.371, and *Alum. Oxon.* IV, p.1602.

³⁸ BL, MS. Egerton 2877, ff.86r-89v.

of personal and familial illness. Read in the context of this prescriptive religious material, the performative aspect (as Peabworth would have it) of Lapworth's poem is readily visible. The text of the poem in Frevile's edition is different again from the Stowe, Ashmole and Caesar versions. Frevile was unaware of the supposed source of the poem and, apparently, of the biographical circumstances – be they the deathbed or an extremity of sickness – that it was supposed to have stemmed from. He titles the work 'Jehovae Liberatori', adding a marginal note: 'Mr Johnsons Verses'.³⁹ Frevile's text contains a good deal of diction and syntax that does not appear in any of the three versions I have already examined. The poem tends to an iambic metre with eleven-syllable lines and, while each of the versions in Stowe, Ashmole and Caesar resorted to a twelve-syllable third line ('my god that holdes my spiritt debtor in durance'), Frevile adds a further syllable as well as containing variant diction: 'My God therefore wth holdst my debted soule in durance'.

I do not wish, here, to make a comprehensive analysis of the variations between Frevile's texts and the others: it is enough to note that it bears sufficient material peculiar to itself to raise the possibility that Frevile came by the poem under different circumstances to those encountered by the transcribers of the Stowe and Ashmole manuscripts. Perhaps Frevile was working from a text descended from a different draft of the poem; perhaps his source was based on the same draft, but was itself a descendant through more or fewer re-writings than those versions; perhaps Frevile (or one of the scribes of Stowe or Ashmole) transcribed the poem from memory rather than with a text at hand. The point is that, like Stowe, Ashmole and Caesar, Frevile's text is a unique rendering of the poem, with particular quirks and emphases.

³⁹ BL, MS. Egerton 2877, f.104v.

Frevile's title is worth dwelling on for two reasons: first, because it has no match in any of the Stowe, Ashmole or Caesar versions and, second, because Frevile appears not to have had access to the information that Lapworth (or 'Latworth' in the other manuscripts' spelling) was thought to be the poem's author and subject.⁴⁰ In each of the other cases, the poem's title holds the text to be the verse meditation of a sick poet written in the desperate throes of illness. Frevile's title casts the poem not as an account of exemplary preparations for death and judgment made by a dying person, but a meditation on Christ's liberation. In grounding the poem in the life of Christ, rather than the biography of an unknown poet, Frevile's text raises the possibility that the process described by Smyth might be in play, by which exemplary material from the Gospels is made to prefigure the life of the compiler (as well as the lives of the commonplace book's future readers).

Some uses to which the poem may have been put by Frevile and his book's inheritors can be inferred from the rest of its contents. Though a different size and shape, and vastly more formal, his book bears similarity to Lynen's commonplace book, at least in that it contains other material designed to assist the sick in the process of dying. But, whereas Lynen's book only provided a collection of philosophical maxims reflecting on death, Frevile's gives a set of prayers to be said for and by the sick in illness. One perhaps significant difference between Frevile's version of Lapworth and the other manuscript texts is that, whereas the first line in Stowe, Ashmole and Caesar's versions makes a Protestant declaration of faith in

⁴⁰ Frevile's reason for ascribing the poem to 'Mr Johnson' is unclear. Earlier in the volume, he noted a verse under the title 'Johnson's conclusion in his Almanack. 1603.' (BL, MS. Egerton 2877, f.70v), perhaps a reference to Thomas Johnson who published five almanacs between 1598 and 1604, though not one in 1603. The verses that Frevile quotes as Johnson's do not appear in any of his existing almanacs. Whether or not the Johnson Frevile had in mind was Thomas Johnson, it is at least possible he was thinking of the same Johnson when ascribing both these verses and the Lapworth poem.

salvation ('My god I speake it from a full assurance'),⁴¹ Frevile gives added emphasis to the poem's prayerful mode of address ('My God: I speake to thee with full assurance'). It is a slight distinction but, being noted, it enables a richer reading of the poem in conjunction with the 'prayer to be vsed by ye sick himselfe' that Frevile gives earlier in his manuscript. The prayer begins with a similar direct address to Christ ('O Lord Jesus thou art the resurection and ye life') and a similar Protestant statement of salvation through faith ('in whome whosoever beleevest shall liue though he dye').⁴² The discrepancies between the claims of the poem and the prayer thereafter are largely matters of nuance. In the prayer, the metaphor is that of the sick person coming to heaven as a 'humble sutor', appealing 'unto thine throne of mercy', while the poem casts sickness as 'heavens churlish porter', toying with the applicant at heaven's gate. The only notable difference of theology is that Frevile prays, 'I neither desire ye continuance of this mortality, or a more speedy deliuerance, but onely commend my selfe wholly to thie will', while the poem demonstrates less patience, claiming, to 'hold this world & worlde delaie in loathing'. Overall, both pieces perform substantially the same function for the reader of the commonplace book: offering examples of prayerful expressions of faith in illness and assistance in the process of holy dying.

Further evidence for this can be found among the book's other material. Shortly after the Lapworth poem, Frevile writes Musidorus's song from Sidney's *Arcadia* into his book, under the title 'Verses agt feare of Death: made by Sr ph: sidney'.⁴³ This new title is strikingly similar to the prayer that immediately follows the one 'to be vsed by the sick': 'A prayer agt ye feare of death. to be said by ye sick

⁴¹ Stowe and Ashmole. Caesar has 'O God I speake yt wth a full assurance'.

⁴² BL, MS. Egerton 2877, f.89r.

⁴³ Ibid, f.105r. These verses appear in Philip Sidney, *The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerat, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912–26), II, p.165.

pson.' Again, prayer and poem have substantially the same purpose – persuading the sick person not to fear death – but, in this case, they take different approaches. The lines from Sidney offer a reasoned proof that there is no need to fear death because it prefigures salvation ('Then lett us hold the blisse of peaceful mind; / Since this we feele, great losse we can not fynde'). The prayer meanwhile seeks comfort for the sick person in fear of death ('I trust, though fraile fleshe begyn to shrink, yet grant most mercifull lord that faith in thie most blessed passion never decay in me that hope never languish, but that the comfortable expectacon of a better life to come, may reviuue & raise up my pensiuue soule'). At the top of the page containing the prayers, Frevile recorded the parts of the scripture that his preacher had recommended to heal the sick.⁴⁴ This evidence Andrew Cambers uses comparatively to introduce his argument that Oliver Heywood's reading of Baxter's *Gildas Salvianus* at a time of illness 'seems to have formed part of an internal personal programme of spiritual recovery'.⁴⁵ But, in Frevile's case, the commonplace book offers more. As well as scriptural places to be read by the sick and prayers to be said by them, he includes 'A forme of prayer to be vsed for ye sick by them that are psent', 'A forme of leauing ye sick to gods protection', 'the manner of commending ye sick into ye hands of god at ye howr of death', 'the recomending of ye sick at his depture & when his is ready to giue up ye ghost' and 'A prayer to be vsed by ye assembly, psently after ye xtian mans depture'.⁴⁶ As Camber's work stresses elsewhere, the act of godly reading cannot necessarily be assumed to entail reading silently or alone and, similarly, the preparations that Frevile recommends for sickening and dying imply a process that was both performative and communal, in which reading and

⁴⁴ They are: 'The history of the passions. luk 22.23. chapter 6 # psalme.42.#. psal:51# & 143. #. St John. 14.#. Revel: 7.#. i corin: 15.#'. BL, MS. Egerton 2877, f.89r.

⁴⁵ Cambers, *Godly Reading*, p.63.

⁴⁶ See BL, MS. Egerton 2877, ff.89r-v.

transcribing poetry (which Pebworth, Marotti and Henry Woudhuysen have established was also communal and performative)⁴⁷ has a contributive role to play.

POETRY IN LIFE-WRITING

Next, I will consider original verse works and their use in illness. We have seen poetry reading and transcribing deployed to serve various purposes during sickness, but more closely pegged to personal experience were those poems written, mostly by women, to accompany their autobiographical and meditative prose texts.

i. ALATHEA BETHELL

Alathea Bethell's notebook of devotional prose and verse, held in Lambeth Palace Library, is the closest of the texts I will consider to the commonplace books and verse miscellanies I have so far discussed.⁴⁸ Bethell's text switches between writing of her own composition and by other authors. The volume is a small calf-bound notebook with its clasps intact. Upper and lower, left- and right-hand margins have been ruled into each of its pages, and page numbers written into the upper margins. Material has been entered from both ends of the volume in Bethell's italic hand.

The book opens with an introductory verse written by Bethell, followed by a set of notes from a psalm translation about which I will say much more. Material from Edmund Waller, Christopher Harvey and Samuel Wesley follows, as well as

⁴⁷ See Henry Woudhuysen, *Sir Phillip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

⁴⁸ Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 2240. A digital facsimile of Bethell's book a technical description is at <http://scriptorium.english.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/>. Little is known of Bethell's life. According to Reginald Bigg-Wither, she was born Alathea Wither in 1655, the daughter of William Wither (1623-1671) and Joan Wither (d.1691), marrying Thomas Bethell of London in 1682, and dying in 1708. Reginald Bigg-Wither, *Materials for a History of the Wither Family* (Winchester: Warren, 1907), pp.19 and 37. She is buried at St. Lawrence Church, Wootton St Lawrence in Hampshire. William Page, ed., *A History of the County of Hampshire*, 5 vols. (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1973), IV, p.241. Some of this information has also been written onto the pastedown endpaper of Bethell's book.

acrostics on Bethell's maiden and married names. The remainder of the volume contains prose meditations under the headings, 'Some Rules for A Profitable Conversation for A.B.', 'Medetations on Death', and 'Meditations. in Sickness and Afflictions'. From the reverse end of the book are two sets of notes entitled 'Directions for A Pious Life' and 'Directions for A Pious and usefull life'.⁴⁹

Bethell's short verse on the first page declares the volume's purpose: 'When noize & hurry has my Hart oprest / This litle book Afoards me Ease & Rest'.⁵⁰ As well as offering Bethell relief in worldly trials, the book was also designed to offer God 'A great Account for such great guifts as These',⁵¹ the 'gifts' being various mercies, among which was 'a competence of health'.⁵² Victoria Burke has described the devotional uses of Bethell's book, arguing that in 'choosing and combining her verbal gifts of recompense to God', Bethell 'is also asserting authorship'.⁵³ But her excellent account of Bethell's sources and editorial decisions privileges the notebook's status as devotional writing (a set of 'Pour Returns'), neglecting its value as a source of 'Ease & Rest'. Bethell used the book both to give praise to God for the mercies he had afforded her – 'for what I have Gods mercys I Adore' – and to seek his assistance in addressing her personal shortcomings – 'For what I want His Ayd I still Implore'.⁵⁴ It is a book of self-improvement as well as religious devotion.

Of course such duality of purpose can be found in most works of devotion and providential self-scrutiny, including those of Halkett, who wrote meditations

⁴⁹ For an introduction to the manuscript, see Victorial Burke, 'London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 2240',

http://scriptorium.english.cam.ac.uk/resources/articles/pdf/Burke_Lambeth_Palace_2240.pdf.

⁵⁰ Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 2240, f.1r.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Burke, 'My Poor Returns', p.63.

⁵⁴ Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 2240, f.1r.

both as 'a memorial of mercies and judgments'⁵⁵ and 'to perform what may bring glory to thee and endless consolation to my own soul whose desire above all things is to be acceptable in thy sight'.⁵⁶ But, in Bethell's case, the relationship between her own prefatory verse, the poetry she collects and the meditative prose she composes has interesting implications for her practices of divine praise and self-correction. The seven folios following Bethell's opening verse contain material from John Patrick's 1679 *Century of Select Psalms*, a distinctly performative text, which Patrick explained was made 'to try as others had done before me, so to fit the Psalms to the common Tunes'.⁵⁷ Bethell's method of collecting material from Patrick is, in Burke's phrase, to compile 'a kind of psalm collage',⁵⁸ collating fifty-one excerpts from Patrick. These are not recorded sequentially from a reading that began with Patrick's first and finished with his hundred-and-fiftieth psalm; Bethell picks and chooses her material from all over the text, jumping, for instance, from a passage from Psalm 139 to lines from Psalm 119 and then on to a passage from Psalm 42.⁵⁹ She does not acknowledge the source of her quotations other than by a general heading announcing the material as being 'Out of Patrick's Psalms';⁶⁰ neither does she make any demarcation between the passages she uses, recording them in a continuous stream of verse. The only division she makes is that the first two pages of material from Patrick is given under the heading 'Petition 1' and written on successive recto and verso pages, whereas the heading of the second, much longer, set of material (written only on recto pages with the versos left blank) announces its purpose: 'To

⁵⁵ NLS, MS. 6499, p.1.

⁵⁶ NLS, MS. 6498, p.i.

⁵⁷ John Patrick, *A Century of Select Psalms* (London: Royston, 1679), sig.A5r.

⁵⁸ Burke, 'My Poor Returns', p.64.

⁵⁹ See Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 2240, f.7r.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, f.1v.

promote a chearfull and thankfull submission in all conditions'.⁶¹

Bethell culls material from Patrick which best conduces to fostering pious submission. Some of the ways in which her book might have afforded her 'Ease & Rest' can be teased out by comparing her adaptation of Patrick to the 'Meditations in Sickness' she inscribes later in the volume. The meditations articulate the methodology for Bethell's devotional practice in illness:

Prayer shall allsoe be the Cheiff Employment of my sickness
I shall soe move Gods Pitty and Abate His Anger towards me
Prayer. is the best Preparitive for my recovery.

My Meditations shall be on the death and Passion. of my saviour
the Holy Sacrement. my Cordiall⁶²

Her 'litle Book' may afford 'Ease & rest', but it is not the source of Bethell's healing, which stems from prayer ('the best Preparitive for my recovery') and the Christian sacraments ('my Cordiall'). The purpose of the book appears to be to put her into a fit state to accept illness piously and quietly:

when my Conscience speaks Peace the world Cannot trouble me. no want
of diversions Afflict me. but my Conversation with my selfe. and lesure to
think of Heaven. is my most pleasant Refreshment⁶³

It is the psalms that she uses to put herself into this peaceful state of conscience in which 'Conversation with my self' and thoughts of heaven offer 'pleasant Refreshment':

A state of Affliction is the schooll of virtues. and our troubles Could. we
see through them. are often our greatest Benefits and we ought often with
Holy Dauid thankfully to Acknowledg. That God in mercy and
faithfullness has Afflicted us. our wisdome. our Patience are then set in A
clear light when tryed by the bareing of Afflictions.⁶⁴

Bethell's meditation fixes in her mind the educational value of 'Affliction' as a

⁶¹ Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 2240, f.3r.

⁶² Ibid, f.25r.

⁶³ Ibid, f.32v.

⁶⁴ Ibid, f.28v.

providential trial of wisdom and patience. In order that she might practice her religious ceremonies in a state of suitable devotion, she suggests 'Holy Dauid' as a useful source of reflection on this point. Thus, when she turns to the 'Cheiff Employment of my sickness' – prayer – Patrick's psalms provide a text she might recite, specifically, his rendering of Psalm 94:

Lord he's A happy man whom Thou
by chastisements hast taught
and thereby to a sense of thee
And of his duty. brought.
God in his mercy will at length.
from trouble set him free.
whilst vengeance ruins wicked mens
short lived Prosperity⁶⁵

The 'litle Book' appears to offer 'Ease & Rest' both by acting as a forum for Bethell's meditative reflections on her sickness and providing the material for her performative, devotional routine. In another meditation, she reflects,

violent Passions are next to distractions.
I will Earnestly Endeavor to conquer them for my Eaze.
to smother them.⁶⁶

Her resolution finds a performative equivalent in Patrick's Psalm 41:

I've learnt the remedy at last
to keep my passions calm & still
I'm nearer help by hope in God
and Resignation to his will⁶⁷

Again the book provides diagnosis in its meditation and offers 'remedy' in the psalms. Rather than exploring her 'Conscience' and 'violent Passions', Bethell's meditations seek to quell them by subjecting them to scriptural prescriptions. Of course, self-reflection cannot be banished entirely but, when it does appear, it is confined to the sceptical oversight of a self that seeks to keep its unruly tendencies firmly in check.

⁶⁵ Ibid, f.5r.

⁶⁶ Ibid, f.31r.

⁶⁷ Ibid, f.3v.

It is worth noting, too, that the book may not have been Bethell's only vessel for such prescriptions. Although she resolved early in her 'Meditations in Sickness' that 'My Meditations shall be on the death and Passion. of my saviour', the material from the life of Christ contained in this book consists of little more than inferences. Another book may have been the receptacle for notes and observations from the Gospels. Whatever the case, the final stage of Bethell's devotional routine of healing entailed assembling a psalm text, of which she was the compositor if not the composer, which afforded her a practical outlet for some of the pious expressions made in her 'Meditation in Sickness'.

ii. ELIZABETH FREKE

Collecting and compiling were also habits of Elizabeth Freke, who, in the last decade of her life, began writing in a folio-sized book. The volume's principle contents were domestic accounts, dominated by three extensive lists of her household medicine collections.⁶⁸ In addition to these catalogues, Freke's book also contains details of her rents and the estate at West Bilney, Norfolk, as well as a memoir under the title, 'Some Few Remembrances of my Misfortuns haue Attended me In my unhappy life since I were Married'.⁶⁹

Freke was born in 1642 to parents from the gentry if not the nobility. She was the granddaughter of Sir Thomas Freke, the merchant and MP for Dorchester, and the daughter of Ralph Freke, a member of the Middle Temple, who settled a fortune of £4000 upon each of his four daughters.⁷⁰ In 1672, she secretly married her second

⁶⁸ Elaine Leong has authoritatively documented this aspect of Freke's book, and its significance as a source of information about domestic medicine. See Elaine Leong, 'Making Medicines in the Early Modern Household', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 82:1 (2008), 145-168.

⁶⁹ See BL, MS. Add. 45718, ff.46v-103v.

⁷⁰ See Ralph and John Freke, *A Pedigree, or Genealogye, of the Family of the Freke's* (Middle Hill: s.n., 1825), fig.4 and *Alum. Oxon.*, II, p.534.

cousin, Percy Freke, and their fraught marriage (in particular, what she perceived as his mismanagement of the family finances) became the dominant subject of Freke's 'Remembrances'.

The book's pages listing medicines and financial accounts are divided into two columns, with the recipes written in a single column. Those containing the 'Remembrances' are ruled with a margin into their left-hand edge, in which Freke keeps a note of the dates to which she is referring. From April 1709, 'the Remembrances' begins to incorporate legal documents and copies of letters she has sent and received. Following the 'Remembrances', the remainder of the book is dominated by recipes and information about the medicinal properties of herbs and plants. Amid the memoir fall three pages entitled 'Some emblems for my own Reading' containing religious verses written by Freke.⁷¹

In its justification of Freke's conduct in various family disputes, Freke's memoir has resonances with Thornton's 'Account of memorable Affaires, and Accidents'.⁷² Her account of herself places the writer as a member of a domestic community fulfilling various roles: notably those of wife and mother, but also that of a partner with her husband in the family estate's financial affairs.⁷³ Freke's independence from her husband is frequently justified: following an argument after one of Percy Freke's many and sustained periods of absence in which Elizabeth had removed herself to Bilney 'to seek my Bread', she complained, 'In all his Times of his being from me, he never took care for A penny for my subsistence or his sons for

⁷¹ BL, MS. Add. 45718, ff.82v-82v.

⁷² See BL, MS. Add. 88897/2.

⁷³ Raymond Anselment draws attention to the self-focused nature of Freke's memoir, arguing, 'Where earlier writers sought justification for self-representation in *res gestae* narratives and spiritual autobiographies, Freke forthrightly emphasizes in her domestic memoirs a self-centered preoccupation'. Raymond Anselment, 'Elizabeth Freke's Remembrances: Reconstructing a Self', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 16:1 (1997), 57-75, p.58.

which God Forgive him'.⁷⁴

In her medical notes as well as in her 'Remembrances' Freke had personalised her material, emphasising her domestic authority. The indexes at the front of the book list each of Freke's medical tables as having been 'Collected for my own use [...]. Eliz Freke'.⁷⁵ Similar lists at the back of the book give the same endorsements, describing the recipes as 'Experyenced by mee Eliza Freke'.⁷⁶ Like Baxter, who claimed in his memoir to be performing 'Soul-Experiments', and Hooke, who used his diary as a receptacle for tested medical information, Freke sees personal experience as a key criterion of reliable knowledge. But, although her recipes bear the signature of personal trialling, Freke also acknowledged their sources. A 'drink for the Ricketts' is credited to 'Mrs Yeats', a treatment for the Rheum to 'Mrs Thacker', a 'watter for the Eyes' to 'Mrs Tornsole' and 'the Mana Purge' to 'Lady Cullpeper'.⁷⁷ The point is that, although Freke's 'Remembrances' were written with self-justification in mind, they were contained in a book that functioned as a collection of knowledge from various sources, designed for practical, domestic use.

That the 'Remembrances' can to some extent be treated differently to the rest of the book is suggested by Freke troubling to copy out an edited version of her memoir into a second manuscript book.⁷⁸ The second manuscript is written in a similar hand, if smaller and clearer, and much material, including letters and biblical paraphrases, from the first text is omitted. This second version seems much more like a completed life-record, bequeathed to posterity. Significantly, the pages of poetry

⁷⁴ BL, MS. Add. 45718, f.53r.

⁷⁵ Ibid, ff.1r, 1v and 2r.

⁷⁶ Ibid, f.245v and 245r.

⁷⁷ Ibid, ff.239r-238v.

⁷⁸ See BL, MS. Add. 45719. For a description of some of the differences between the texts and their relationship to the Edwardian edition of Freke's 'diary' edited by Mary Carbery, see Anselment 'Elizabeth Freke's Remembrances', pp.59-60. Mary Carbery, ed., *Mrs. Elizabeth Freke her Diary, 1671-1714* (Cork: Guy, 1910).

that appear in the middle of the first text are left out of the fair copy. Evidently these pages contained information designed for immediate practical and domestic use but not deemed worthy of recording in a self-justifying personal history.

They begin with a note of the scriptural text on which Freke meditates in the subsequent verses: 'Some emblems for my own Reading – Text is Psallm: 6: verse 2d Haue Mercy upon me Lord for I am weak, O Lord heale me – for my bones are sore vexed: Eliz Freke: A Dialogue between the Soule & Jese'.⁷⁹ Another verse on a psalm follows, after which comes a verse meditation on a passage from Ecclesiasticus and another on a passage from James. Although the title verse of the first poem proclaims that it is a response to physical pain (bones being 'sore vexed'), Freke transplants her suffering into her soul. The resulting poem presents a personified soul, suffering physically with the purpose of issuing a religious lesson:

Soule O I Burne, I fry, I cannot Rest. I
know nott where to Fly. –
To find some Ease I Turne my blubbred Face
from Man, to Man: I Rose from place:
to Place. – to Avoid my Torture, To
Obtaine Reliefe – But stil am –
Dogged and hanted with my Grifes:
My Midnight Torments call the Slugish-
Light; –And when the Morning
Comes, –They woo the right: –⁸⁰

The poem, designed for Freke's personal use, not wider distribution, offers the relative novelty of direct speech from Christ, whose healing response to this generalised suffering is physical examination:

Jesus Hold forth thy Arme and Lett my –
Fingers Try – thy Pulce where

⁷⁹ BL, MS. Add. 45718, f.82v.

⁸⁰ Ibid. In quoting Freke's verse I have observed her lineation as it appears in the manuscript. Anselment's edition organises the verse to reflect Freke's pentameter lines. *The Remembrances of Elizabeth Freke 1671-1714*, ed. Raymond Anselment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.133-139.

Chiefly does thy torment Lye. –⁸¹

The corruption appears to be physical, but orthodox diagnostic examination is useless. Christ's healing touch upon the soul is required. The conclusion of the poem issues Freke with an reminder of the importance of faith in sickness.

Jesus Tis either thou must Bleed sick Soule
or I: – My blouds is A cordiall; Hee thatt
sucks my veins; shall clense his own
and Conquer Paines; – then these: Cheer up
this pretious Bloud of Mine, shall Cure
thy Grieffs – My hart shall bleed for Thine
Believe and view me with a Faithfull Eye
thy Soule shall neither Languishe, Bleed, or Dye⁸²

Enacting Christ's exhortation to Freke to affirm her faith in order to cure her griefs, these verses represent a number of departures from the book's established method. Where Freke's Remembrances have been, in Anselment's phrase, 'decidedly secular',⁸³ in sickness, she turns to piety. Where she had invested significant energy in noting her collection of medicines and medical knowhow, here, she disdains physical healing for spiritual. And, where previously she had written almost exclusively prose, now she switches to verse.⁸⁴ After the poem, Freke draws an ink line across the column, beginning a short verse that reaffirms her meditation on sickness and Christ.

Canst Thou be sick, & such A Doctter By,
thou Canst not Live unless thy doctter Dye,
strang kind of Griefe, that finds no Medicyne Good
to swage her pains. But the phisitions Bloude.

Eliza: Freke⁸⁵

These lines make the most direct application of Christ's crucifixion to illness and

⁸¹ BL, MS. Add. 45718, f.82v.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Anselment, 'Elizabeth Freke's Remembrances' p.57.

⁸⁴ There are other examples of verse in Freke's book, but not of her own composition. She records 'A Song made by My husbands Father Captain Arthur Freke' (BL, MS. Add. 45718, f.133r), the ballad entitled 'The Downfall of Charing Cross' (ibid, f.157v), 'An Epistle on K: Wm the third' (ibid), 'The French King's Cordiall' (ibid, ff.125r-124v) and 'The British Ambassador's Speech to the French King'. Ibid, ff.121-v-r.

⁸⁵ BL, MS. Add. 45718, f.82v.

medicine. Her illness is more than the abstract vehicle for a metaphor in which 'the phisitions Bloude' 'swages' her pains: the note at the top of the page announcing the verses as being designed for use when Freke's bones were 'sore vexed' suggests that the 'Griefe' and 'pains' she mentions were literal as well as spiritual ailments. Like the rest of the verses written on these pages, Freke has signed her poem at the bottom. The equivalence between her taking ownership of her verses and of her medicines is noteworthy: in both cases, practical healing means are undersigned by their creator or collector. A second point of note is that, unlike most of the rest of the volume (but like her indices of medicines), the pages of verse are divided into two columns with a black line drawn down the centre of the page. But the page layout also shows some continuity between the verses and the 'Remembrances'. The verses do not fill the whole of three pages and, rather than leaving the final column part-full and moving to a new page, Freke returns to her prose 'Remembrances' in that space. If this is flimsy evidence on which to base a claim that Freke appears to regard her verse meditations as part of her memoir, it is bolstered by the fact that at the start of the first and third pages of poetry, she gives a marginal date ('1710 June 22:' and '1710 June 23:') in exactly the same manner that she does for each prose entry in the memoir. Her poems were not a significant enough part of the narrative of Freke's 'Misfortuns' to merit inclusion in the edited version of that account, but they had sufficient healing value and perhaps sufficient value as material for her pious meditations to be written into the first volume in a textual form that bore resemblance to both her medicine lists and her life-writing.

iii. KATHERINE AUSTEN

The techniques of collecting and recording displayed by Bethell and Freke are also evident in Katherine Austen's book of meditations and autobiography, though Austen intersperses her prose life-writing with verse in a more consistent manner than Freke did. Austen was born Katherine Wilson in 1629, to Robert Wilson, a draper, and his wife Katherine. She married Thomas Austen, a member of Lincoln College, Oxford, and later Lincoln's Inn, in 1645, and was widowed in 1658 aged twenty-nine.⁸⁶ Her widowhood and its trials, financial, personal and physical,⁸⁷ are the dominant subjects of her book.

The book is a quarto volume, written throughout in a clear italic script. The title page calls the volume 'Book: M:', implying that it is the thirteenth in a series of similar books (references to other volumes identified by letter codes appear throughout). A table of contents follows, spanning three pages and giving titles and page numbers for the book's meditative items. As well as meditations, the book contains copies of letters, lists of financial information, reflections on individual experiences and original poems. Austen protests that Book M is a private work yet also appears to anticipate future readers and to design the book in a mode consistent with public circulation. Before beginning her meditations proper, she announces, 'Whose ever shal look in these papers and shal take notice of these personal

⁸⁶ For Austen's biography and method, see Sarah Ross, "'And Trophes of his praises make'": Providence and Poetry in Katherine Austen's Book M 1664-1668' in Victoria Burke and Jonathan Gibson, eds., *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004), 181-204. For a discussion of Book M, see Raymond Anselment, 'Katherine Austen and the Widow's Might', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 5:1 (2005), 5-25.

⁸⁷ The subject of particular focus is the dispute arising from her late husband's suspicious acquisition of the Highbury estate in Middlesex in 1632. After his death, Thomas Austen's creditors pursued Katherine, seeking to take possession of the estate, to which she clung doggedly in spite of numerous legal challenges. See *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles II, 1670*, ed., Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1895), p.101.

occurrences will easily discern it concerned none but myself, and was a private exercise directed to myself. The singularity of these conceptions doth not advantage any'.⁸⁸

Austen's book clearly had overlapping functions: to collect material for personal and practical use, and to justify her conduct in the disputes that ensued during her widowhood. The manuscript gives clues as to how Austen used her books, reporting on one occasion, 'Adversity and prosperity: both conduces for good: and the place of rising: and ye place of falling is most at Courts: see: pag: 23 book C: pag – 26: book: J:'.⁸⁹ As well as offering personal comfort, the maxim adds weight to the body of evidence suggesting that Austen regarded her symptoms and experiences as adjustments in a continuing process of correction. That she refers to places in two of her other volumes implies a habit of reviewing her notebooks and charting the connections between them.

Like Bethell, Austen gathered much material from the psalms for use in adversity. During the 1665 plague, she copied the text of Psalm 91 into her book,⁹⁰ including its third verse: 'Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence'. Following the psalm, Austen notes, 'Dav: composed this 91 sal: when 70000 died in 3: daies'.⁹¹ After that comes a ten line poem under the title 'My God', assuring, 'Noe Antidote from men that can prevent /

⁸⁸ Ibid, f.4v. Sharon Arnoult says that this passage indicates that Austen 'clearly anticipated that another person might "look in these papers..."' Sharon Arnoult, "Some Improvements to Their Spiritual and Eternal State": Women's Prayers in the Seventeenth Century Church of England', in Julie Campbell and Anne Larsen, eds., *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 121-136, p.125. James Daybell sees Austen's announcement as 'the seventeenth-century equivalent of Private-Keep Out', but says that, in spite of this, there is much evidence (not least in the writing of Anne Halkett and Alice Thornton) that 'the spiritual journal is a literary form with rhetorical conventions rather than a divinely attested 'proof' of the holiness of its author'. James Daybell, *Women and Politics in Early Modern England: 1450 – 1700* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004), p.224.

⁸⁹ BL, MS. Add. 4454, f.91v.

⁹⁰ Ibid, ff.88v-89r.

⁹¹ Ibid, f.88v.

Onely that providence divinely sent'.⁹² Two weeks later, she returned to meditating on the plague, praying 'O Lord in mercy spare this tender ffamily in this populous Contagion',⁹³ after which, she records a (slightly-edited) set of verses from Psalm 76, ('Thou dost cause judgement to be heard from heaven') and the maxim of Proverbs 14:32 that 'the righteous hath hope in his death'.⁹⁴ This process of collection, editing and composition appears to bear out the suggestion that Austen's book represented a resource for her own protection when the threat of illness (among other things) loomed, enabling both an immediate, prayerful response to impending danger and a reflexive one based on reading (perhaps in conjunction with the texts of her other books).

The onset of plague saw Austen adapting the biblical texts she read to the situation she faced and composing verses meditating on those texts. But, on occasion, she was confronted by more unusual and personal dangers requiring more specialised treatment. In October 1665, Austen reports a dangerous experience. Sitting in a tree, she 'fell from a hight about 3 yards to ye ground which bruised my face of the left side. And my right Thumbe put out of joynt. SO that I lay deadt at present and had not the least fear of my faling'.⁹⁵ Two passing women – with some consternation, the tree having 'frighted many a person that it was haunted with spirites'⁹⁶ – came to Austen's aid carrying her to a nearby house where she 'could not in a good while recouer to know how I cam by that hurt and much amased to see my self In that disorder'.⁹⁷ In time, however, 'by Gods blesing I recouered my great illnes by cordiales. wch the sickness of vomiting up blood divers times by the way had

⁹² Ibid, f.89r.

⁹³ Ibid, f.89v.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid, f.98r.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid, f.98v.

weekened my spirits. My temples had laied upon it 4 leeches'.⁹⁸

These are edited highlights of the prose account that Austen gives of the episode, which was a sufficiently traumatic experience that she also composed a poem reflecting upon it. The verse betrays no inkling of doubt as to the cause of her fall:

Revoulted spirits that place did haunt
Yet some wre of opinion caut
What were those foes? for what conspire
I have not Logicke to enquier
I cant detirminate that thing
Onely a supposition bring
Admit the crew of Belsebub
Waighted my rival with their Club
And that the regiment of Hell
Had there concentred out a spell⁹⁹

Where Austen's prose reflection on her fall confines itself to the observable facts – there had been fear among the local people that the tree she sat in harboured demons – in verse she allows herself leave to speculate, reaching beyond the limits of her 'Logick'. The poem presents the odds as impossibly stacked against her: the 'crew of Belsebubb', 'their Club' and the 'regiment of Hell' are pitted against her alone. Recasting the episode in military terms, Austen appears to place herself in a vulnerable setting similar to Eve's in *Paradise Lost*, going out into Eden, while 'Such ambush hid / among sweet Flours and Shades / Waited with hellish rancour imminent / To intercept thy way, or send thee back / Despoild of Innocence, of Faith, of Bliss'.¹⁰⁰ The range and purpose of Austen's poem is thus much different to that of her prose account, and, while the prose narrative records a cure by 'cordials' and 'Leeches', the poem ascribes her recovery to divine intervention:

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid, f.99r.

¹⁰⁰ John Milton, *Paradise Lost: A Poem in Twelve Books* (London: Simmons, 1674), p.226 (IX, 408-11).

Heavens bright eye
 Dissolued their blacke Confederacy
 Then came the help of my great guide
 Who took notice I did slide
 And the blessed Spirits attended
 Then from the brinke of death did save
 Another life at instance gave¹⁰¹

It is interesting that this poem demonstrates such striking differences between Austen's verse and prose concerns in addressing a single episode of illness, and that the poem licences Austen to speculate on the spiritual forces at work in causing her accident and recovery. Caution, however, is required. There is much evidence in these examples of Austen holding to the established methodology of her book. For one thing, the purpose of the poem is not solely to speculate upon the cause of her accident, but also to give praise to God for her surviving it.

The same life Lord let me for ever lay
 And here forth dedicate both night and day
 Texalt thy praises which soe much abound
 In all my prosecutions doe resound.
 His High favoure was thus showne
 Unto me who deserued none.¹⁰²

To sing God's praises in verse was one of the primary concerns of 'Book M'. In one poem, Austen urges herself on to that end, beginning, 'Come all my thoughts, awake, awake, / And Trophes of his praises make'.¹⁰³ And in another, fearing that she may not be able to 'shine / Thy praises forth', she pleads, 'Infuse O Lord that Spiritual flame / That I may offer thee the same'.¹⁰⁴ In the same way, the poem about the fall from the tree is not an expression of self-assertion, but of Austen's vulnerability to divine and hellish forces, and of gratitude for having received protection. The whole account of the incident is reported as a 'Commemoration by the escaping immediate

¹⁰¹ BL, MS. Add. 4454, f.99r.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid, f.67r.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, f.66v.

Death on a surprise'.¹⁰⁵ In this sense, it is an item of the collection that has equivalence with her meditations on the psalms. Austen announces that her intention is to align herself with David as a celebrant of heavenly benevolence: 'O Let me magnify and bless thy name for that great mercy and blessing to me: surely with David thy mercies are more in number then I can count'.¹⁰⁶ The psalms appear to have provided adequate material to enable her to apply these practices to general and public matters like the plague, but personalised ones like the illness caused by her fall require personalised poetic compositions.

POETRY AS LIFE-WRITING

Austen was by no means alone: numerous seventeenth-century writers instinctively turned to verse-writing in illness, several producing dedicated works of poetry rather than pieces conceived as features of memoirs, diaries or books of meditations. Poets seemed to find inherent value in verse-writing for regulating the humours. In 1585, George Puttenham asked, 'what else is language and utterance, and discourse & persuasion, and argument in man, then the vertues of a well constitute body and minde'?¹⁰⁷ And of historical poetry he claimed, 'No one thing in the world with more delectation reuiuing our spirits then to behold as it were in a glasse the liuely image of our deare forefathers'.¹⁰⁸ Josselin, struggling with 'vayne boylings of [his] spirit', and praying God, 'oh thoroughly mortifie them' might, in Puttenham's understanding, just as well have begun a poetic composition. If the spirits were enlivened by poetry, all the more reason for poets to produce such performative, occasional texts as Pebworth describes, when they found themselves beset by illness.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, f.98r.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: Field, 1589), p.255.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.31.

Anne Wharton did exactly that, taking up the theme of poetry's relationship to illness. Wharton was known as a perpetual invalid, whose condition seems not to have been helped by a complex of torrid family relationships.¹⁰⁹ Her one dedicated illness poem, 'Verses on the Snuff of a Candle made in Sickness' addresses her poetic Muse, to whom she stands in complex relation:

Dear melancholy Muse, my constant Guide,
Charm this coy Health back to my fainting Heart,
Or I'll accuse thee of vain-glorious Prize,
And swear thou dost but feign the moving Art.

But why do I upbraid thee, gentle Muse,
Who for all Sorrows mak'st me some amends?
Alas! our sickly Minds sometimes abuse
Our best Physicians, and our dearest Friends.¹¹⁰

Wharton expressly hopes the Muse will be able to restore her to health, but her ambitions for poetry ought not to be overstated. Appealing to the Muse to 'Charm this coy Health back to my fainting Heart' but quickly acknowledging that the endeavour is hopeless; she seems to be hoping for a miracle. The process seems to be physiological, Wharton asking her Muse to use its 'moving art' to restore her health. Sidney, of course, held that to move was the chief end of poetry, poets being under obligation to 'imitate, and imitate both to delight & teach, and delight to move men to take that goodnesse in hand, which without delight they would flie as from a stranger; and teach to make them know that goodnesse whereunto they are moved'.¹¹¹ The 'moving art' that Wharton, after Sidney, claims for poetry is literal. 'Truly', says Sidney, 'I have knowne men, that even with reading *Amadis de gaule*, which, God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect *Poesie*, have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesie, liberalitie, and especially courage'.¹¹² Although Wharton's poem

¹⁰⁹ See my comments on this in Chapter 3, pp.158-159.

¹¹⁰ Wharton, *Surviving Works*, p.190.

¹¹¹ Sidney, *Complete Works*, III, p.10.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p.20.

is unusual in making no outright expression of piety, it bears comparison with the ambitions of Puritans who sought to absorb spiritual truth into the heart, while at the same time guarding against infection by pestilential vapours. Her heart is fainting and she seeks to rejuvenate it by having the Muse manipulate her health, which is – she acknowledges – 'Best part and substance of our Joy'.¹¹³

But Wharton has strayed into error. Her sickly mind has perverted the natural scheme according to which the Muse should be the agent not the recipient of her petitions. In attempting to turn the moving effect of poetry in on herself, she has merely drawn attention to the scant relief she has received from verse writing. Her closing stanza admits the fault is hers. Wharton has behaved as one who, in Sidney's phrase, 'would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth',¹¹⁴ and her claim that her Muse is able to 'make her 'some amends' sets poetic healing above medical, while pointing to the limitations of poetry's healing abilities. Poetry may be Wharton's 'best Physician' and 'dearest Friend', but, if her poem is a hymn of praise to her Muse, it is one to a physician and friend that offers slight rather than transformative assistance.

i. NICHOLAS BILLINGSLEY

The Presbyterian minister Nicholas Billingsley also turned to verse composition when illness struck. In 1658, Billingsley published *Kosmobrephia*, a verse account of the creation of the earth (written – according to its title page – 'some years since by N.B. then of Eaton school'). That work had an explicit performative purpose, and came closer to acknowledging the power of poetry to rejuvenate flagging spirits.

¹¹³ Wharton, *Surviving Works*, p.190.

¹¹⁴ Sidney, *Complete Works*, III, p.10.

Billingsley's prefatory epistle acknowledges that he composed his verses '*for mine owne pleasure and profit*',¹¹⁵ and in particular because, '*I found no better remedy to rouse my selfe out of my dampish malencholy (to which I was naturally enclined) then a fit of Poetry*'.¹¹⁶

Throughout his work, Billingsley assumes an equivalence between poetry and healing, both of which were divinely meted out. A poem dedicated to his friend the parliamentarian officer John Birch, which prefaced 1667's *Treasury of Divine Raptures*, echoes Herbert's remark that 'a verse may finde him, who a sermon flies',¹¹⁷ observing 'Poesie is divine, 'tis not of man, / It's God that taught me Poems to compose; / And he may write in Verse, who seldom can / Have opportunities to preach in Prose'.¹¹⁸ And a poem entitled 'On Christ' from the same volume claims, 'In him alone we can find true content. / He's Grace, Gold, Balm, Bread, Wine, Salvation, / To deck, enrich, heal, strengthen, comfort, crown'.¹¹⁹

A year before the appearance of *Kosmobrephia*, Billingsley graduated from Oxford, having, according to Anthony Wood, 'had a long sickness hanging upon him' during his education.¹²⁰ So severe was Billingsley's illness, says Wood, that he 'was dispenced with by the Ven. Congreg. for the absence of eight Terms'.¹²¹ During his absence, Billingsley lived in his 'Fathers house, he wrot in vers'.¹²² The work he produced was *Brachy-martyrologia*, a retelling in rhyming couplets of episodes from *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. Billingsley dedicated the book to Jeremy Martin, the Bristol

¹¹⁵ Billingsley, *Kosmobrephia*, sig.A4v.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ George Herbert, *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F. E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p.6.

¹¹⁸ Nicholas Billingsley, *A Treasury of Divine Raptures* (London: T.J., 1667), sig.A4r.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.111.

¹²⁰ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London: Bennet, 1692), p.799.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

physician who treated him, of whom he writes, 'Have not I great cause to admire (and, if I may so say, adore you for) your profound judgment, your excellent ability, and singular care, so opportunely exercised towards me your Patient, in the raising up of my infirm body, even then, when I had passed the sentences of death upon my self, and was thought, in the eyes of all, irrecoverable?'¹²³

Much of Billingsley's verse followed the practice of viewing illness and its divine corrections in terms of alchemical refinement. *Brachy-martyrologia*'s epistle 'To the Reader' proclaims, '*Affliction is Gods furnace; the Saints are Gold put into it*'.¹²⁴ The precedent he follows is scriptural: Ezekiel 22:18 has 'Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver'. The idea gained popularity among Puritans,¹²⁵ and Donne applied it to illness, reflecting in *Devotions*:

Man who is the noblest part of *Earth*, melts so away as if he were a *statue*, not of *Earth*, but of *Snowe*. We see his owne *Enuie* melts him, hee growes leane with that; he will say, anothers *beautie* melts him, but he feeles that a *Feuer* doth not melt him like *snow*, but powr him out like lead, like yron, like brasse melted in a furnace: it doth not only melt him, but *Calcine* him, reduce him to *Atomes*, and to ashes; to water, but to lime. And how quickly? Sooner than thou canst receiue an answer, sooner than thou canst concieue the question;¹²⁶

Calcination was the chemical process, described by Joseph Du Chesne, of extracting 'salts out of all things'.¹²⁷ By Du Chesne's time, the technique had developed into a two-stage process: 'out of such kinde of Ashes (whereof Oribasius maketh mention)

¹²³ Nicholas Billingsley, *Brachy-martyrologia* (London: Cottrel, 1657), sig.A4v-A5r.

¹²⁴ Ibid, sig.A7r.

¹²⁵ See Robert Rollock, *Lectures, Upon the History of the Passion* (Edinburgh: Hart, 1616), p.386, 'Thine heart shall bee set on fire, & that fire is mightie, & will burne up the drosse of thy saluation, which is in thy foule heart'; John Reynolds, *Vituli Labiorum* (London: Cockeril, 1678), p.10, 'If the fire of Persecution be permitted to try the Gold, surely the fire of Hell it self shall burn up the dross'; and Anthony Horneck, *The Fire of the Altar, or, Certain Directions How to Raise the Soul into Holy Flames* (London: Lowndes, 1683), p.75, 'O kindle Holy Fire in my Breast! Burn up the dross and Tin there, and let nothing but pure Gold remain'.

¹²⁶ *Devotions*, pp.22-23.

¹²⁷ Joseph Du Chesne, *The Practise of Chymicall, and Hermeticall Physicke, for the Preseruatiō of Health*, trans. Thomas Timme (London: Creede, 1605), sig.f2r.

they drawe out the whole water, and drye it up: and that which remaineth in the bottome, being impure salt, they dissolue againe with common water, or with the proper water thereof, (which is better) distilled from it, before the Incineration of the matter, that they may make the same cleane and pure, and as cleere as Christall'.¹²⁸ In addition to a comprehensive chemical process of reduction – distilling elemental substances from iron and base metals – Donne also invokes a spiritual process: his claim to being reduced to 'ashes; to water, but to lime' echoes Isaiah 33:12, in which God announces, 'And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire'.

In *Kosmobrephia*, Billingsley meditated further on the metaphor of refinement by fire. Reasoning the spiritual value of affliction, at times, he is relentless in arguing himself '*out of my dampish malencholy*':

Who would not willingly endure
A minutes time a, little paine;
If after that he might be sure
Ten thousand years of ease to gaine?¹²⁹

The thumping iambs and end-stopped rhymes give resounding support to his relentless logic. But Billingsley has more than an unarguable proposition to buoy him up in illness: he sees affliction as a spiritual purging, expressed again by reference to the gold smeltery:

Cleanse me from soul infecting sin,
And purely purg away my dross,
O do thou take from me my Tin;
(And make me joy in such a loss,)
O Lord my crooked wayes reforme,
And be my pilot in a storme.¹³⁰

If '*Affliction is Gods furnace*', Billingsley finds himself undergoing an aggressive

¹²⁸ Ibid, sig.f2v.

¹²⁹ Billingsley, *Kosmobrephia*, p.81.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

process of purification: his dross is purged, tin burned away, experiences that Alice Hayes also recognised, proclaiming at a time of severe illness, 'Now was the *Refiner's Fire* felt to burn very hot in order to burn up the *Dross and Tin*'.¹³¹ Billingsley seems to share Donne's understanding (expressed in his letter to Cockayne) of his symptoms as fermenting him 'for heaven': the process is physical, and necessary to his teleological striving towards resurrection. Vivid though the metaphor is, it is also important to note that it is conventional rather than original, Billingsley expressing not the singularity of his refinement, but its orthodox necessity. The idea of God guiding Billingsley as his pilot through a storm is taken up again at the poem's conclusion:

Lord, uphold me in my walk,
For ah! my feet are apt to stumble;
Chain thou my tongue from sinful talk,
In all conditions make me humble?
O give me grace to trust in thee,
So shall, it then goe well with me.¹³²

The refinement that Billingsley undergoes is not a process of his individual empowerment, but one of essential submission. Rather than glorifying Billingsley's fitness for heaven, it fastens his stumbling feet to the path and constrains his tongue from its insinivative habit of sinful chatter. In this light, Billingsley's observation, 'Poesie is divine, 'tis not of man, / It's God that taught me Poems to compose', seems to make a claim for the inherited, straitening effects of verse writing, rather than its original, expressive qualities.

ii. AN COLLINS

Billingsley's illness moved him to write verse but, apart from his claim that the

¹³¹ Hayes, *A Legacy, or Widow's Mite*, p.30.

¹³² Billingsley, *Kosmobrephia*, p.85.

purpose of his writing was '*to rouse my selfe out of my dampish malencholy*', correspondences between poetry and healing appear mainly to be embedded in his texts as assumptions rather than articulated outright. An Collins, a poet who leaves very little biographical record, claimed to gain healing benefits directly from verse writing. Collins is known only as the author of 1653's *Divine Songs and Meditations*; no other source of information about her life exists. The volume implies that Collins suffered from a long-term illness that left her physically disabled and frequently forced her into confinement. That her illness was life-long is suggested by the work's longest poem, 'The Discourse', which reports, 'Even in my Cradle did my Crosses breed, / And so grew up with me, unto this day'.¹³³ Collins describes a complex of multifarious problems ('variety of Cares'),¹³⁴ announcing, 'For one distemper could no sooner dy, / But many others would his roome supply'.¹³⁵ Her long-term confinement is expressed in the work's dedication 'To the Reader', which reveals, 'by divine Providence, I have been restrained from bodily employments, suting with my disposition, which enforced me to a retired Course of life'.¹³⁶ Its prefatory poem also mentions her 'Being through weakness to the house confin'd'.¹³⁷

Collins's dedication sets an interesting context for what follows, revealing that her purpose in turning to poetry was therapeutic. Being constrained by bodily weaknesses, Collins announces, 'I became affected to Poetry, insomuch that I proceeded to practise the same; and although the helps I had therein were small, yet the thing it self appeared unto me so amiable as that it enflamed my faculties, to put forth themselves in a practise so pleasing'.¹³⁸ Writing poetry may have made only a

¹³³ An Collins, *Divine Songs and Meditations* (London: Bishop, 1653), p.4.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid, sig.A2r.

¹³⁷ Ibid, sig.A3r.

¹³⁸ Ibid, sig.A2r.

slight improvement in Collins's health, but the process is clearly established. Speaking of poetry having 'enflamed my faculties', she sounds not unlike Puttenham claiming that historical poetry was capable of 'reuiuing our spirits'. Indeed, her becoming 'affected to poetry', Collins says, was the occasion 'Wherein it pleased God to give me such enlargednesse of mind, and activity of spirit, so that this seeming desolate condicion proved to me most delightfull'.¹³⁹ The process, ordained and enacted by God, sees Collins becoming 'affected to poetry', which enflames her faculties, enlarges her mind and activates her spirits such that she is able to take delight in her invalid life and the opportunities it provides her to explore her poetic affections.

Although Collins appears from this description to be using poetry to induce a passionate response with implications for her illness, she stops short of claiming that writing poetry was the sole cause of an upturn in her health. On the contrary, from infancy, Collins speaks of vainly attempting 'My several crosses namely to express',¹⁴⁰ finding that 'words of pity would no grief release'.¹⁴¹ She required God's intervention on her behalf ('God in mercy some refreshing send, / Whereby I learn'd his goodnesse to admire / And also larger blessings to desire');¹⁴² only after that intervention was she able to indulge in therapeutic verse meditations:

But that I may proceed methodicall,
When first the restlesse wanderings of my minde,
Began to settle and resolve withall
No more to bee disturbed with every winde
It such a pleasing exercise did finde
Which was to ponder what Worth ech day
The sence of Hearing should to it convey.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p.5.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

Like Mary Rich, who used her diary to help establish order in her 'roueing thoughtes', Collins performs devotional exercises to help her 'proceed methodicall' and constrain the 'restlesse wanderings of my minde'. Her twentieth-century editor glosses 'pleasing exercise' as 'a meditative exercise intended to calm one's fears and settle one's thoughts by using a sensory experience, in this case hearing, to prompt an examination of the spiritual meaning and value of every day'.¹⁴⁴ These particular listening and meditating exercises may or may not have entailed writing poetry, but it seems clear that Collins envisaged her poetry, which she says she did not initially intend to publish,¹⁴⁵ as a part of her meditative practice. '*It was my morning exercise / The fruit of intellectuals to vent, / In Songs or counterfets of Poesies*',¹⁴⁶ she says in her verse Preface. Her work stands as an assertion and reassertion of the pleasures of life and devotion that her illness left her unable to experience in her young life.

After that, like the secular North, fixing in his mind '2 grand points of philosophy', she says, 'If cross disgrace or dismall accident, / Indignity or loss, befallerh mee, / Immediately distempers to prevent, / I cald to mind how all things ordered bee'.¹⁴⁷ One of the work's later poems finds Collins declining to bemoan what she called the hard 'Winter of my infancy', reminding herself that 'though Spring be late / Perhaps my Sommer-age may be, / Not prejudiciall, but beneficiall'.¹⁴⁸ Her resolution is to 'learn my self to undergo more then I doe / And still content my self with this / Sweet Meditacion and Contemplation / Of heavenly bliss'.¹⁴⁹

But, while arranging such reminders into lines and verses may reinforce

¹⁴⁴ An Collins, *Divine Songs and Meditations* ed. Sidney Gottlieb (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996), p.97.

¹⁴⁵ 'Vnto the publick view of every one / I did not purpose these my lines to send, / Which for my private use were made alone'. Collins, *Divine Songs and Meditations*, p.2.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, sig.A3r.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p.7.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p.52.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p.58.

Collins's sense of spiritual well-being at times of physical discomfort, like Wharton, she recognises poetry's limitations as a source of relief. Performance cannot be allowed to distract from piety, and Collins takes care that she does not succumb to temptation and become carried away by verse writing. Her work ends with a series of five poems entitled 'Meditacions' and a verse 'on the Twelfth Chapter of Ecclesiastes'. The fifth meditation concludes with a reminder:

that which fits one to embrace
The sence of God's exceeding Love and Grace
Is skilfulnesse in that most blessed Art
Of walking with the Lord with upright heart,¹⁵⁰

Her phrase 'skilfulnesse in that most blessed Art' is almost paradoxical, expressing as a craft a state that Collins appears to regard as inspired – as her claim that the happiness of walking with the Lord with an upright heart is something 'one may feel far better then expresse' implies. In the case of poetic skill, Collins realises that the danger lies in the possibility of becoming overwhelmed by the exuberance of self-expression, and she checks herself:

But lest whilst being wrapt above my sphere,
With sweetnesse of the Theame, I should appeare
Quite to forget the nature of a Song,
And to some this might seem over-long,
My thoughts theyr workings, speedily suspends,
And at this time my Meditacion ends.

Being too easily 'wrapt above my sphere' / with the sweetnesse of the Theame', Collins's song might begin to grow over-long and lose force as a reminder of heavenly benefits, perhaps leaving her open to a charge of religious enthusiasm, and neglecting one of her crucial religious arguments: that 'suffrings are of speciall use'.¹⁵¹ She brings the meditation to a jarring conclusion, enforcing the suspension of

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.92.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p.49.

her meditative thoughts and returning to the 'matter thick and grosse'¹⁵² of her body. The interruption to her spiritual transport gives an uncomfortable reminder that, while (as another poem puts it) such bodies as hers 'Attaining to this happinesse, / Are freed from their drosse', and made 'impassible, / Uncapable of pain',¹⁵³ poetic self-expression should not be mistaken for a long-term heavenly remedy.

iii. HESTER PULTER

Hester Pulter, by contrast, wrote at least one poem appearing to revel in a transcendent imaginative experience during illness, although, as I will show, the restorative powers of her verse too had limitations. Pulter (the daughter of James Ley, the judge and politician about whom Milton wrote his tenth sonnet)¹⁵⁴ is the author of a manuscript containing 120 poems and a prose romance. The inscriptions of her poems imply that at least four were written during episodes of sickness.¹⁵⁵ Three of those express a broadly similar desire to be released from the sufferings of the corporeal world into the bliss of heaven. Pulter uses a poem inscribed 'Made when I was sick 1647' to persuade herself that she should not fear death, remarking incredulously, 'Ah me how sore how sad is my poor heart / How loath my soule is from my flesh to part',¹⁵⁶ and asking herself, 'Art thou not weary of this dismale stage'?'¹⁵⁷ In another, 'Made when my spirits were sunk very low with sickness &

¹⁵² Ibid, p.44.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Milton describes Ley as 'that good, Earl, once President / Of *Englands* Counsel, and her Treasury, Who liv'd in both, unstain'd with God or fee...' Milton, I:I, p.61.

¹⁵⁵ Alice Eardley has cautioned against deducing biographical evidence from Pulter's text, noting that the poem headed 'Made when my spirits were sunk very low with sickness and sorrow. may 1667. I being seventy one years old' mistakes either the poem's date or Pulter's age. Alice Eardley, 'Lady Hester Pulter's Date of Birth', *Notes and Queries*, 57:4 (2010), 498-501. It is nonetheless plausible that the poems were written in response to sickness, especially the fourth which declares 'Sad, Sick and Lame, as in my Bed I lay'. Brotherton MS. Lt q 32, f.67r.

¹⁵⁶ Brotherton MS. Lt q 32, f.48v.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

sorrow', she incites herself, 'Rouse up my soul, shake off these Rags of Clay',¹⁵⁸ reasoning that the cause of her prolonged earthly suffering was her failure to offer sufficient praise to God. Thus, she resolves, 'Then lett me have my few and Evil Dayes / Breath Nothing forth but thanks and Praise'.¹⁵⁹ The last of these conventional sickness poems, 'Made when I was not well April 20. 1653', is in similar vein to the 1647 poem with Pulter asking herself, 'My soul why dost thou such a mourning make / This Loathsom ruind Prison to forsake'?¹⁶⁰ In this poem, she comes closest to acknowledging that poetry-writing has an active role to play in her attempts to ready her soul for release from her body. Among a catalogue of her body's deteriorations with age and illness – bemoaning the dullness of her eyes, lankness of her hair, paleness of her lips, and withering of her breasts – Pulter complains 'My joyes to Heaven with my Dear Pen did fly'.¹⁶¹ For pleasure and for poetic inspiration, she looks away from the corporeal world.

Pulter's fourth illness poem, probably composed during sickness after childbirth, was written in 1648 (when she reports being 'so weak, that in ten days and a night I never moved my head one jot from my pillow').¹⁶² She appears to have fewer reservations than Collins, and enacts this removal of the poet from her body, falling back on her imaginative capacities:

Sad, Sick and Lane, as in my Bed I lay
Least Pain and Passion should bear all the sway
My thoughts beeing free I bid them take their flieght¹⁶³

Rather than regarding her flights of imagination as sinful distractions, as Collins and

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, f.88v.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, f.73v.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, f.74v.

¹⁶² Ibid, f.67r. This poem is also in Jill Seal Millman and Gillian Wright, eds., *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Poetry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 117-9.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

others did, Pulter regards her imaginative faculty as distinct from her physiological, emotional one. Her anxiety that, in her ailing state, 'Pain and Passion' threaten to 'bear all the sway' suggests a scheme of understanding on which illness disables her from her putting bodily pain and passion to poetic use. Her response is imaginative: she bids her thoughts 'take their flieght'. There follows a visionary tour of the solar system in which Pulter's thoughts orbit the moon (which she describes as 'another World', remarking, 'as the Moon a Shadow Casts and Light / Soe is our earth the Empres of their Night').¹⁶⁴ After that, she passes Venus, and attempts to examine Mercury before it is obscured by the light of the Sun, which, although Pulter regrets that 'His radiant Beames dazled my tender eye', still, she adds, 'to my Reason this appeared the Best / That hee the Center was of all the rest'.¹⁶⁵ That Pulter's reason is engaged in this cosmic vision suggests a more precise sense of the physiology (or non-physiology as the case may be) of the process by which the exercise of her imagination, through reason, allows her to escape her bodily ailments. Collins deployed poetry as part of a religious exercise through which she was afforded better appreciation of God's goodness and mercies, and Billingsley described a non-specific process by which he was roused from 'dampish melancholy'; but Pulter speaks of reason in combination with imagination as the mental faculty that is engaged in her transcendence of the body and entry into an imaginative realm of inter-stellar space. In the remainder of the poem, she takes in Jupiter and Saturn, as well as the stars saying 'their vast Brightnes Soe my Mind Amazed / That my afrighted Fancie Downward Flew'.¹⁶⁶

But, like Collins, Pulter is conscious that her imaginative flights offer only

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, f.67v.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, f.68r.

temporary relief from bodily affliction and, ultimately (if perhaps reluctantly), she appears to follow Collins's argument for the divine significance of affliction. Her poem concludes with a sudden restoration to consciousness and her body:

And then my Mayds my Window Curtains Drew
And as my Pain soe Comforts did renew
Unto the God of truth, Light Life, and Love
Il'e such Layes Here begin shall end Above.¹⁶⁷

The dream's physical interruption by the maid opening her curtains brings both a restoration of Pulter's pains and a reminder of her comforts (a term with devotional resonance, that Wilson glosses as 'That Inward spirituall refreshing and strengthening of the heart, by the consideration and feeling of Gods mercifull promises in Christ').¹⁶⁸ Although she stops short of making an explicit causal connection, Pulter's return to pains coincides with a reminder of 'Gods mercifull promises in Christ'. Here is another jarring change of direction: apart from a recognition in the title that 'my gracious God restored me', this poem has been substantially non-religious, the first mention of God coming in the sixty-seventh of its sixty-eight lines. The work, although it enacts an imaginary transcendence of Pulter's body in illness, also enforces a return to the body, culminating in a resolution to continue to her pious duty of singing God's praises on Earth and in Heaven. The fact that, alongside an assertion of her religious 'Comforts,' Pulter also issues a jolting reminder of her continuing pain and her incommoded, bed-ridden state, suggests that, like Collins, she may hold to the view that 'suffrings are of speciall use'.

DONNE'S 'HYMNE TO GOD MY GOD IN MY SICKNES'

Finally, I want to turn to an original poem composed in response to illness that seems

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, f.68v.

¹⁶⁸ Wilson, *Christian Dictionarie*, p.65.

to have put up some resistance to being co-opted into the manuscript system. Donne's 'Hymne to God, my God, in my Sicknes' does not seek to raise the poet from a fit of melancholy, nor to enliven his spirits or engage his imagination. Rather it enacts Donne's solemn preparations for death, appearing to constitute one of the most private texts this thesis has encountered. The poem is an exception to Peter Beal's general rule that 'probably more transcripts of Donne's poems were made than of the verse of any other British poet of the 16th and 17th centuries'.¹⁶⁹ Only five seventeenth-century manuscript versions of the poem survive, two of them inscribed in copies of printed works that were published after Donne's death. And transcription and circulation of the other three after the date of Donne's death cannot be ruled out.

The first version appears in the British Library's MS. Stowe 961, a small folio volume, written in a single hand, containing 102 poems by Donne and eleven by other authors. The volume belongs to what Beal identifies as the third group of Donne's manuscripts: those which appear to stem from a common single source, 'possibly representing early texts of the poems'.¹⁷⁰ Beal places the volume's compilation between 1623 and 1633.¹⁷¹ The text of the 'Hymne' in this volume does not vary greatly from the first printed version (that of the 1635 edition of Donne's *Poems*).¹⁷² Like the rest of the volume's text it is formally laid out in a clear, italic hand, and decorated at the start and finish with a hand-drawn grape motif. The letter 'F' and the word 'Finis' conclude the text. In addition to differences of spelling and capitalisation, the Stowe volume contains one variation of diction implying that its source text may be different from that of the printed edition. Where the 1635 *Poems*

¹⁶⁹ Beal, I:1, p.245.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p.249.

¹⁷¹ Beal, I:1, p.251.

¹⁷² John Donne, *Poems by J. D. with Elegies on the Author's Death* (London: Marriot, 1635), pp.387-388.

gives 'For, though those currants yeeld returne to none', Stowe has, 'For though their Current yeilde returne to none'.¹⁷³

The poem's second manuscript version – bound into the volume of Julius Caesar's papers that contains the Lapworth poem I have already discussed – shows the same textual variation.¹⁷⁴ Caesar's text appears on a single sheet, folded in half. The poem is written in a secretary hand on the first recto and verso pages of the resulting bifolium. While this text also bears peculiarities of spelling and emphasis, it is substantially the same as Stowe. On the second verso page, Caesar has written, 'D. Dun Deane of Paules his verses in his greate sicknes in Decemb. 1623'. While this dating is generally accepted, though not conclusively proved,¹⁷⁵ what is significant for my purposes that Caesar felt it necessary to peg the poem to a particular biographical incident.

A verse miscellany held in the Bodleian Library provides the poem's third seventeenth-century manuscript version.¹⁷⁶ This text contains only excerpts from the 'Hymne', giving the first two stanzas and the final one under the heading 'A Hymne in sickness.'. The volume is a leather-bound quarto containing miscellaneous notes – mostly but not exclusively poetic – in several hands, though with one dominating. The pages are crammed with material including notations written sideways and upside down at the margins and between the poems. Donne's poem shares page space with two others. The page is divided by a vertical line drawn down the middle to

¹⁷³ BL, MS. Stowe, 961, f.110v.

¹⁷⁴ BL, MS. Add. 34324, ff.316r-v.

¹⁷⁵ The arguments of John Sparrow, 'On the Date of Donne's "Hymne to God My God, in My Sicknesse"', *Modern Language Review*, 19:4 (1924), 462-466 for 1623 were challenged by Evelyn Simpson, 'The Date of Donne's "Hymne to God My God in My Sicknesse"', *Modern Language Review* 41:1 (1946), 9-15, which argues for 1631. However the weight of opinion has since shifted to 1623. The principal exponent of that case is, Helen Gardner, 'Appendix E: The Date of "Hymn to God my God, in my sickness" in *John Donne: The Divine Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 132-135, whose arguments have been generally accepted.

¹⁷⁶ Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. poet 142, f.16v.

create two columns, with Donne's stanzas appearing in the right-hand column, in the upper part of the page. A horizontal line below Donne's verse, slightly below the middle of the page, divides the right-hand column into two parts, with a second poem, 'On Mrs Venitia Stanlye to Mr Paynter', occupying the space beneath it. The left-hand column contains a lyric poem with much astrological vocabulary, whose first line is 'I th lessone of this graue lets lye', seeking to seduce a woman. Adam Smyth dates the volume's construction to 'around 1650', while Beal attributes it to 'c.1630s-40s'.¹⁷⁷

The two versions of the 'Hymne' written into printed volumes are held in Princeton University Library and at the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado. The Princeton volume is a 1633 copy of *Deaths Duell* with four poems, all first printed in the 1635 *Poems*, written onto the endpapers at the front and back of the book.¹⁷⁸ Along with the 'Hymne', the volume also contains a handwritten version of 'Elegy XIV' ('Since she must goe, and I must mourne, come night'), as well as two poems erroneously introduced into the 1635 edition: 'Elegy XIII' ('Come, Fates; I feare you not. All whom I owe') and 'Ode' ('Vengeance will sit above our faults; but till'). The final version is written into a copy of the 1633 *Poems* held by the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado.¹⁷⁹ The volume has the name 'H. Mapletoff' inscribed on its title page. On the blank recto sheet following the text's final printed page, a heading has been written: 'Additions to Dr Donne in ye Edition 1669. 8vo', beneath which the Holy Sonnet 'Thou hast made me' is the first of fifty items of verse and prose, including the 'Hymne', that have been written into the book on eighty

¹⁷⁷ Adam Smyth, *'Profit and Delight': Printed Miscellanies in England, 1640-1683* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), p.188n, and Beal, 1:1, p.375.

¹⁷⁸ Princeton University Library, shelfmark RHT 17th- 188. The edition in question is John Donne, *Deaths Duell* (London: Fisher, 1633).

¹⁷⁹ United States Air Force Academy, Colorado, STC 7045.

supplementary pages. A further twenty-two poems printed in the volume have received substantial alteration by hand.

This represents the extent of the known manuscript versions of Donne's 'Hymne'. Accepting the composition date of 1623 suggested by Caesar, Arthur Marotti entertains the idea that the poem 'was a premature valedictory gesture, finally restricted in circulation after the poet recovered from his illness'.¹⁸⁰ This line of reasoning follows an argument put by Helen Gardner, in which she contends, 'The Hymn is a solemn poem, written in expectation of death. He might well have been unwilling to publish a poem written in an expectation which had been falsified by the event'.¹⁸¹ Whether or not this supposition is accepted, it is worth pointing out that several of the Holy Sonnets appear to describe a similar point of anticipated death. Most obviously, the fifth begins, 'Oh my black Soule, now thou art sumōned / By Sicknes, Deaths Harold & Champion',¹⁸² while the sixth ('This is my Playes last Scene')¹⁸³ and fifteenth ('What yf this present were ye worlds last night?')¹⁸⁴ both announce themselves as having been written at what is assumed to be a moment expecting death. And the closing paradox of the 'Hymne' – 'Therefore that he may raise, the Lorde throwes downe'¹⁸⁵ – famously appears in various adaptations throughout the sonnets. Holy Sonnet eleven gives, 'One short sleepe past, we live eternally / And Death shal be no more, Death thou shallt dy'.¹⁸⁶ And Holy Sonnet nineteen recasts Donne's physical symptoms ('ridlingly distemperd, cold & hott') as

¹⁸⁰ Arthur Marotti, *John Donne: Coterie Poet* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), p.286.

¹⁸¹ Gardner, (1952), p.135.

¹⁸² I take the Westmorland manuscript (New York Public Library, Berg Collection, no shelfmark), unique among Donne's manuscripts in containing all nineteen Holy Sonnets, as my text for these poems. Digital facsimile images are available at <http://digitaldonne.tamu.edu/NY3-biblio.html>. These lines are at f.34r.

¹⁸³ Westmorland MS., f.34r.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, f.36v

¹⁸⁵ BL, MS. Stowe 961, f.111r.

¹⁸⁶ Westmorland MS., f.35v.

evidence of his being thrown down with the purpose of being raised: his 'deuout fitts come and go away / Like a fantastique Ague', such that he is able to proclaim, 'Those are my best dayes, when I shake wt feare'.¹⁸⁷

But, while the 'Hymne' survives in five known manuscript versions, Holy Sonnets five, six and eleven survive in fifteen each,¹⁸⁸ and Holy Sonnet fifteen exists in eleven known manuscripts.¹⁸⁹ In addition to the number of surviving manuscript versions (which is still significantly lower than that of some of Donne's secular poems),¹⁹⁰ the types of manuscript collection in which these poems are preserved is also notable. The three sonnets that appear in fifteen manuscript sources have identical histories of transmission in the major collections, each appearing in manuscript collections of Donne's poems from manuscript groups that Beal identifies as I (Newcastle, Cambridge Balam, Dowden and St Pauls),¹⁹¹ II (Denbigh, Puckering, Dublin, Norton and Dolau Cothi),¹⁹² III (Stowe, Luttrell, Dobell and O'Flahertie),¹⁹³ and IV (Westmorland).¹⁹⁴ One text featuring these poems comes from the group of manuscripts that Beal denotes as being 'Associated with Group III' (Bridgewater).¹⁹⁵ The Westmorland manuscript, however, is the only known manuscript version of

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, f.37v.

¹⁸⁸ For Holy Sonnet five's MS. versions see Beal, 1:1, pp.442-444, for Holy Sonnet six, see *ibid*, pp.491-492, and for Holy Sonnet eleven, see *ibid*, pp.325-326.

¹⁸⁹ See *ibid*, pp.545-546.

¹⁹⁰ Beal identifies forty-three manuscript sources of Donne's 'Elegie on the Lady Markham' and forty-four of 'The Flea'. *Ibid*, pp.337-340 and 359-361.

¹⁹¹ Newcastle: BL, MS. Harley 4055; Cambridge Balam: Cambridge University Library, Add. MS. 5778(c); Dowden: Bodleian Library, Eng. poet. e.99; and St Paul's: St Paul's Cathedral Library, 49.B.43. Beal classifies Group I texts as 'MSS which, with one exception, descend from a single, probably authoritative collection (X), this source containing no poem written later than 1614'. Beal, 1:1, p.249.

¹⁹² Denbigh: BL, MS. Add. 18647; Puckering: Trinity College, Cambridge, CT1 R.3.1; Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, MS. 877; Norton: Harvard University Library, MS. Eng. 966.3; and Dolau Cothi: National Library of Wales, MS. 6748. Beal classifies Group II manuscripts as 'MSS which, for the most part, appear to descend from another probably authoritative collection (Y)'. Beal, 1:1, p.249.

¹⁹³ BL, MS. Stowe 961; Luttrell: Cambridge University Library Add. MS. 8468; Dobell: Harvard University Library MS. Eng. 966.3; and O'Flahertie: Harvard University Library, MS. Eng. 966.5.

¹⁹⁴ Group IV, solely consists of Westmorland.

¹⁹⁵ Huntington Library, EL 6893.

Holy Sonnet nineteen.¹⁹⁶

Whether or not we accept Gardner's explanation that Donne restricted the circulation of his 'Hymne' because his expectation of death 'had been falsified', he clearly gave that poem different treatment to that which the Holy Sonnets received. The sonnets were released into the system of manuscript circulation, appearing in collections based on 'probably authoritative' sources, while the 'Hymne' found its way into only one major Donne manuscript, and that apparently based on 'early texts'. Perhaps some reflections on the generic differences between those poems might help illuminate Donne's varying approach to their common subject. The 'Hymne' overtly announces itself as autobiographical. All of these works make copious use of first person pronouns, but the 'Hymne' explicitly connects the 'I' of the poem with John Donne the Dean of St Paul's, issuing a reminder that, in life, 'to other Soules I preach'd thy word'.¹⁹⁷

More than that, the poem's final stanza goes on to state its purpose, announcing Donne's 'text and Sermon to myne own' [soul]: 'Therefore that he may raise, the Lorde throws downe'.¹⁹⁸ In addition to the possible reluctance to circulate a funeral poem having survived the experience it describes, Marotti suggests that, after taking holy orders, Donne took a noticeable turn away from poetry, arguing that 'the wish to put strict limits on [the Hymne's] transmission is consistent with Donne's reluctance to compose the elegy for the Marquess Hamilton. The poetical Dean wanted to be finished with poetry'.¹⁹⁹ Donne did, Marotti points out, continue to

¹⁹⁶ See Beal, I:1, p.444.

¹⁹⁷ BL, MS. Stowe, 961, f.111r.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Marotti, *John Donne: Coterie Poet*, p.286. Donne's complained about writing Hamilton's elegy in his letter accompanying the verse: 'If you had commanded mee to have waited on his body to Scotland and preached there, I would have embraced your obligation with much alacrity'. Donne, *Poems* (1633), p.148. For a discussion of Donne's reluctance to write poetry in later life, see David Novarr, *The Disinterred Muse: Donne's Texts and Contexts* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press,

distribute copies of his sermons. The portrait of Donne that emerges is consistent with his differing treatment of the 'Hymne' and the Holy Sonnets. He appears to have instigated the circulation of some of his divine poetry, enclosing a set of '*Holy Hymns and Sonnets*' in a letter to Mary Herbert, and commending them 'to your judgment, and to your protection too, if you think them worthy of it'.²⁰⁰ The hymns, he said, were to Christ's 'dear name addrest',²⁰¹ and, while the identity of the poems sent to Herbert cannot be recovered, this is at least evidence of Donne's willingness not only to distribute his religious verse, but also to surrender his control over its heritage and protection.

So far as can be told, the 'Hymne' was not submitted to anyone's judgment or protection but Donne's own. It preached fortitude in illness to his soul, a technique practised, as we have seen by Frevile, whose commonplace book contained prayers designed to encourage pious acceptance for the sick to recite ('Since this we feelee, great losse we can not fynde').

Donne's text, 'Therefore that he may raise, the Lorde throws downe', is itself derived from an argument developed in a work in the tradition of *ars moriendi*, Thomas Becon's *The Sicke Mannes Salve*. In that text, Becon rehearses the case at greater length: 'For the nature and property of God is to wound: before he healeth, to throwe downe: before he lifteth up, to kyll: before he quickneth, to condemne: before he saueth. Therefore feare not. For the lord dealeth none otherwise with you, than he doeth with his other saints'.²⁰² The subtitle of Becon's work declares its purpose: *Wherin the faithfull christians may learne both how to behaue them selues patiently*

1980), pp.194-201.

²⁰⁰ Walton, *The Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert*, p.17.

²⁰¹ Ibid, p.18.

²⁰² Becon, *The Sicke Mannes Salve*, p.379.

and thankfully, in the tyme of sickenes, and also vertuously to dispose their temporall goodes, and finally to prepare them selues gladly and godly to die. This prescriptive formula appears to be matched by Donne's practice in the 'Hymne' and its expression of his patiently tuning himself at heaven's door. The poem also bears out Pebworth's argument that 'coterie poems were written as "performances" to mark specific "occasions"',²⁰³ although, in this instance, the coterie is restricted to a membership of two.

Delivering his simple text and sermon to his soul, Donne reassures himself and urges acceptance of his flattened state. But the poem is not only an act of self-conditioning anticipating death, it also addresses God directly, announcing, 'I shal be made thy musicke'.²⁰⁴ In God's presence, the 'Hymne' offers preparations for Donne's death, praying for admittance to 'that holy roome' and notably discarding Donne's sense of individual identity in favour of fellowship with Christ: 'Soe in his Purple wrapt, receiue me Lorde'.²⁰⁵

In fact, so self-abasing is the 'Hymne' that Donne is mostly a passive recipient of action on his body, almost to the extent of being a non-participant. In the Holy Sonnets, Donne is the recipient of divine action on his person too, but his relationship with God is active, Donne issuing commands, complaining, pleading for assistance, and revelling in the transformations God's interventions effect upon him. The 'Hymne' makes only one statement of intent: that Donne plans to 'tune the instrument at the dore' of God's holy roome, thinking 'now before'²⁰⁶ about what he must do when he arrives. He offers a single statement of opinion: 'I ioye that in these

²⁰³ Pebworth, 'John Donne, Coterie Poetry, and the Text as Performance', p.64.

²⁰⁴ BL, MS. Stowe 361, f.110v.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, f.111r.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, f.110v.

straits I see my west'.²⁰⁷ And the favours he requests are all prayers to be received in his devout condition.

The 'Hymne' then seems to present a number of paradoxes. Intensely private as it may have been, the poem is nonetheless ritually performative. Although it is personalised to the extent of announcing John Donne, Dean of St Paul's, as its speaker, the 'text and sermon' it delivers are not original, being drawn from a convention of *ars moriendi* and having been articulated by Thomas Becon seventy years earlier. Indeed, the poet's sense of selfhood is not asserted, but rather Donne refers himself to the typological models of Adam and Christ, asking 'Looke Lords and finde both Adams met in me'.²⁰⁸ But in this submission to Biblical types Donne is also linguistically inventive: describing himself as being in Christ's 'Purple wrapt', he is simultaneously referring to the purple robe in which Christ was dressed before crucifixion,²⁰⁹ Christ's saving blood, and the flush of Donne's fever. A product of the period in which Donne 'wanted to be finished with poetry', the 'Hymne' nonetheless struggles to rid itself entirely of poetic ingenuity. But, in spite of his occasional trickery, Donne turned to verse writing in this exceptional case, not for the enlivening of his spirits as suggested by Puttenham, but, lying 'flat on this bed',²¹⁰ to perform before God a prescribed ceremony of dying.

In this chapter, I have presented a more disparate set of evidence than in the previous three. My intention in gathering these examples was to show some of the ways in which habits of collecting and composing poetry in illness mirrored the practices of

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, f.111r.

²⁰⁹ Mark 15:17: 'And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head'.

²¹⁰ Ibid, f.110v.

self-accounting I described in the earlier parts of the thesis. My focus on performance emphasises the practical value of these texts – whether collected or composed – as devotional responses to illness, frequently seeking to present the sick person as engaged in the process of holy dying. This, however, was not the limit of poetry's practical use in illness. In fact, my evidence suggests that poetry composition and collection bore some similarity to diary-keeping as a devotional act. The practice of collecting verse in commonplace books implies a practical habit of hoarding resources to be returned to at times of crisis, as diaries were. In poetry collection, as well as in the other types of life-writing with which I have dealt, collectivity was often a feature of the devotional text. When he was ill, Boyle wrote letters seeking to co-opt Katherine Jones into prayer on his behalf; Rich and Thornton designed their texts for circulation among their immediate family circles; and Gilbert Frevile specifically included in his commonplace book material both to be recited by the sick person and by the family members at his bedside. Secondly, just as I have argued for diaries especially as establishing a restrictive methodology for recording life events, I find examples of similar behaviour in poetry. I show Nicholas Billingsley making a claim for the straitening effects of verse writing rather than finding value in original expression. Ann Collins similarly regarded poetry as restrictive, and Hester Pulter produced a poem enacting a transcendent removal from her ailing body but which also enforced a sudden return to it. Finally, just as I have shown various autobiographical texts, including those of Baxter, Halkett and Thornton, incorporating multiple modes of life-writing into single works, I also show Donne's 'Hymne to God, My God in my Sicknes' both attempting to shed the trappings of poetic ingenuity in favour of piety and, at the same time, holding to his

old habits of metaphor and wordplay. In fact, I find Donne drawing on the habits of his coterie verse to establish and develop his relationship to God at a time of severe illness.

These materials suggest that, in spite of there being some examples of seventeenth-century poetry being regarded as physically invigorating, my subjects were more concerned with using verse in illness as a framework for reflecting on their relationship to God. Puttenham and Sidney might refer to poetry as being able to enliven the spirits, Anne Wharton might propose that her Muse was 'her best physician' and 'dearest friend', but she also acknowledges that the Muse offers slight rather than transformative assistance. Bethell resorted to the Psalms in illness, rather than to original verse; Katherine Austen composed a poetic response to her illness following a dangerous fall, but it was predominantly devotional, written to sing God's praises for her having survived rather than to accelerate her recovery. Overall the picture is one of verse, in all its various forms, offering more prescriptive than self-assertive responses to illness.

CONCLUSION

The main conclusions of this thesis are these:

i. That seventeenth-century illness needs to be interpreted as a part of a complex of personal experiences that was intricately entangled with family, social and religious life.

Many of the writers I have treated were accustomed to viewing their lives as participant in one or more communities of interconnected relationships. The family is the most commonly recurring example of such a community, though I have also encountered Hooke, for instance, defining his diaristic self by reference to his intellectual circle, and Baxter reflecting upon himself in light of his ability to serve the parish-church networks in which he moved. When ill, Baxter was often concerned about his ability to fulfil his ministerial obligations: 'All this forementioned time of my Ministry was past under my foredescribed Weaknesses, which were so great as made me live and preach in some continual expectation of Death', he complained, though, on reflection, he realised the benefit that, in affliction, he was able 'to speak to Sinners with some Compassion, as a dying Man to dying Men'.¹

Many of the textual networks I have treated include family histories as a core

¹ *Reliquiae Baxterianæ*, I&II, p.21.

component. One of Oliver Heywood's notebooks contains a series of obituaries of his father, mother, wife and mother-in-law, announcing that the history of his wife had been 'collected by her surviving husband for the future use of our two hopeful sons'.² Heywood recorded the illnesses of his family with greater frequency and in similar style to his own. In 1664, he entered, 'we returned to Coley-hall where we found my son John very sick of the meazles, and that very day the neighbours were called in to see him dye, but god restored him, Eliezer had also passed that disease in our absence, and Martha my maid had been near death, but blessed be god that hath not made a branch upon us, nor laid them all under sicknes together but successiue, and now hath wonderfully raised their bodys'.³ Josselin had a similar habit of regarding his family's providential treatment as an extension of his own. The family, in Josselin's understanding, was subject to collective correction, producing a collective emotional response; as Josselin recorded, 'The Lord was good to mee and my family in many wonted mercies and favours, many families under his correcting hand, wee in health and if sadnes or illnes over night joy cometh in the morning'.⁴

Similarly, the Twysden papers contain Roger Twysden's descriptions of the life and death of each of his parents and his wife, Isabella Twysden. In each case, he gives an account of his subject's character and, in Isabella's obituary, this includes noting that 'she was of a weake constitution very sickly'. So much so, in fact, that Twysden found himself 'some tymes jesting wth her and saying in sport not long before her end if God ryde me of this for a second wife I would take no thought she as conscious of her owne weaknesse replyed mock not it may bee sooner then you think and so it happened',⁵ the joke implying a connection between the physiological

² BL, MS. Add. 45963, f.44r.

³ BL, MS. Add. 45965, f.39r.

⁴ Josselin, *Diary*, p.53.

⁵ BL, MS. Add. 34163, f.110r.

condition of the wife and the social condition of the husband.

Alice Thornton's so-called autobiography was a devotional response to the 'Afflictions: Tryalls: Prouidences Mercys and Deliuurances Receaued from God since ye Death of my deare Husband', in which she prayed leave 'To inioy that good Inheritance wch thou in abundant mercy hath Prolonged soe many hundred of yeares in the name & blood of my deare Husband and his forefathers & yt I may liue by thy good Prouidence to see thy Gospell Established in my generations, in my Family and blood'.⁶ Thornton's texts demonstrate communalism from the reverse perspective. It was often when she was socially isolated, that Thornton suffered illness: 'I beeing at & before the Death of my deare Husband fallen into a very great & dangerous Condition of Sickness weakness of body & afflicted mind on ye Account of my Euill Enemies Slanders, wth excess of grief for there or, as related by me in my first booke more att Large'.⁷ I have shown examples of a similar physiological response to social scandal from the memoir of Anne Halkett.

The final piece of evidence for illness as a communal experience that I will offer, is the devotional response to illness in families. Boyle, though absent from his sister, in illness, sought to enlist her prayerful assistance. In his commonplace book, Gilbert Frevile not only gathers prayers 'to be vsed by ye sick himselfe', but devotional material including, 'A forme of prayer to be vsed for ye sick by them that are prsent', 'A forme of leauing ye sick to gods ptection', 'A prayer agt ye feare of death. to be said by ye sick pson', 'The manner of comending ye sick into ye hands of god at ye howr of death', 'The recomending of ye sick at his depture & when he is ready to giue up ye ghost', and 'A prayer to be vsed by ye assembly, plenty after ye

⁶ BL, MS. Add. 88897/2, p.109.

⁷ Ibid, p.25.

xtian mans deputation'.⁸ Such collectivity implies a response to sickness and dying that entailed a family's devotional participation rather than the individual having, when mortally ill, to repent his or her sins and present him- or herself to God alone.

ii. That, while particular experiences of illness were sometimes described in terms expressing their singularity, textual responses to illness were commonly prescribed by standardised models, or borrowed from scriptural or other religious writings.

The standard models for recording illness, in some cases, were as straightforward as stock-phrases designed for an easy recap of God's particular dealings with these writers. I have presented evidence of the structural formula to which Mary Rich's diary entries mostly conformed, and the stock phrases of Josselin's diary. In 1599, sixty five consecutive entries in Margaret Hoby's diary began with the phrase 'after priuat praier' / 'after priuat praers', while during the same year she spoke of having 'examened myself' forty two times and performed 'examenation' thirty seven times.⁹ One of Rich's favourite terms to describe her condition in illness was 'indisposed', an adjective capable of meaning both 'sick' and 'disordered'.¹⁰ Indisposition often threw Rich's devotional routine into disorder. One morning in 1670, she reported, 'in the morneing waked much indisposed with a paine in my head which forest me to lye longer in bed then usuall, I had time onely to read and in a short prayer to comit my selfe to Godes protection'.¹¹ The regularity of Rich's entries, presumably, enabled her

⁸ BL, MS. Egerton 2877, ff.89r-v.

⁹ BL, MS. Egerton 2614, ff.8r-31r.

¹⁰ Cotgrave, *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*: 'Sicklie, crazie, vnhealthfull, ill-disposed, ill at ease; also, disorderlie, ill-couched, illsorted; ill-fauoured'.

¹¹ BL, MS. Add. 27352, f.91v.

to identify examples of such disorder when she read her text back (which she did frequently) intending, she announced in 1673, 'to helpe me to exsamen my selfe in order to the receauing the Sacrament, which I intended the next Lordes day to do'.¹²

A more prescriptive model for autobiographical writing was financial accounting. Baxter had the habits of quantifying profit and loss and rewriting that information in various texts into his life-writing. Acknowledging that 'To recite a Catalogue of my Symptoms and Pains, from Head to Feet, would be a tedious interruption to the Reader',¹³ he gives instead a *précis* of his physical condition, listing complaints (outgoings), followed by divine mercies (incomings). His symptoms included, 'a flatulent Stomach, that turn'd all things into Wind; a Rheumatick head to a very great degree; and great sharpness in my Blood, which occasioned me no small trouble by the excoriation of my Fingers ends', added to which, 'every Spring and Fall, or by any kind of heating, my Nose still fell a bleeding'. Against that, Baxter set twin benefits: 'That I was never overwhelm'd with real Melancholy' and 'that my Pains, though daily and almost continual did not very much disable me from my Duty'.¹⁴ This thesis has encountered numerous similar examples, in which the influence of accounting practices can be detected.

As well as frameworks derived from secular practices that enabled life-writing, the subjects of this thesis had much recourse to scriptural models. Frevile, Freke and numerous others had the habit of recording scriptural texts to refer to in illness, in whose light they could read the other material collected in their notebooks. Halkett's meditations took the form of reflections on her experiences, often recast in the light of various scriptural places. A meditation of 1670 on the sickness of her son

¹² BL, MS. Add. 27354, ff.241v-242r.

¹³ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, p.10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Robert, is accompanied by a marginal reference to Psalms 119:133. Praying for mercy for herself and Robert, Halkett announces, 'any sense I have of mercy comes from thee & the praise I have from it is from thy Grace.'¹⁵ Her concluding plea is, 'therefore Lord Governe us as thine, & let nott any iniquity have dominion over us', a formulation she quotes directly from the scriptural verse cited in the margin.¹⁶ Rather than overstep the boundaries of piety, Halkett chose to couch her plea for intervention on Robert's behalf in Biblical rather than her own language.

Alathea Bethell provides perhaps the most clear-cut example of a writer co-opting the psalms for personal use, editing John Patrick's psalm translations to create a psalm collage. One example here will help establish the formulaic approach Bethell took to her material. Rather than particularising her experience her instinct, like Halkett's, was to let it be consumed by Biblical discourse. The extent to which she does this can be seen by comparing an excerpt of Bethell's text to the Patrick psalm she adapts. From Psalm 103, Bethell has:

Its he forgives thy sins. and does.
thy troubles all remove.
its he redeems Thee from the grave.
and Crowns Thy life with love¹⁷

Patrick's text gives:

It's he that pardons all thy sins,
He that in sickness makes thee sound:
Its he redeemed from the Grave
Thy Life, with Love and Mercy Crown'd¹⁸

In Bethell's rendering, 'sickness' has been written out, replaced by 'troubles'. Her version is metrically different from Patrick's, so perhaps the change was made to fit the verse better to her style of singing. Even so, her six-syllable line could have

¹⁵ NLS, MS. 6492, p.103.

¹⁶ Ibid, p.104.

¹⁷ Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 2240, f.7r.

¹⁸ Patrick, *A Century of Select Psalms*, p.107.

accommodated a reference to sickness without damaging scansion or rhyme scheme ("thy sicknesses remove", for instance, scans in the same way as 'thy troubles all remove'). Rather, the already-rewritten psalm has been rewritten again with the effect that it becomes a multi-purpose verse, adaptable to any troublesome situation rather than customised for use in one particular episode of illness.

iii. That religious and non-religious models for describing illness often shared similar methodological frameworks.

Lotte Mulligan's useful formulation that Hooke's intention in his diary was to produce 'a fully objective "history" with himself as datum',¹⁹ might just as well be applied to the Puritan diary-keeping of Josselin or Hoby. Mulligan, however, rejects this claim, arguing that, while Puritan diaries regarded the authorial self as their subject, Hooke attempted 'to see himself with the eyes of a stranger'.²⁰ I do not recognise this distinction, preferring to see both Hooke's diary and Josselin's as arising from a culture in which subjects and objects were not so easily distinguishable. Each diarist sought to collect and examine a body of medical evidence and to draw conclusions from it. Josselin's purpose in doing so was to assess his relationship to God and prospects of salvation. Hooke, on the face of it, was indeed performing a different task: making himself the object of a series of experiments in physic-taking in order to determine medicines that worked and those that did not. But Hooke's memorandum book contained more than simply records of symptoms suffered and drugs taken. The text makes extensive records of Hooke's

¹⁹ Mulligan, 'Self-Scrutiny and the Study of Nature', p.312.

²⁰ Ibid, p.318.

financial incomings and outgoings, as well as the social company he kept. Little concerned with the diarist's subjective experience Hooke's text may be, but that is not to claim it proposed only to derive experimental data from the exercise. On 22 November 1673, he recorded, 'Stayd not at Coffe house – wrought this account. a stormy night. first began to leave off my physick ale and drink plain ale – God succeed it'.²¹

Here, it is possible to glimpse a diarist who does not automatically view his health from a position of detachment, but one who, as well as giving equal weight to his social movements, the weather and his physic-taking, believes in (and very occasionally makes record of) the hand of God in his bodily condition. The entry from Hooke invites comparison with Josselin's entry for 16 January 1676, in which he reported, 'winterly weather about 10 dayes. my leg runs waterish. god in mercy preserve my health, well in my body. god bee good in thy holy day'.²²

These excerpts suggest that Hooke and Josselin might have been more similar in their approach to life experience than Mulligan allows. The example from Hooke, however, is not typical. In spite of Waller's assertion of his piety,²³ Hooke very seldom mentions God in the diary, much less offers a prayer for healing. My claim is not that Josselin and Hooke shared a common worldview, but that their diaries made comparable assumptions about the relevance of the external, material world to defining the life each sought to record. Hooke's philosophical method of recording his illnesses and Josselin's providential one are, in some ways, analogous. Take, for

²¹ Hooke, *Diary*, p.71.

²² Josselin, *Diary*, p.589.

²³ 'He always exprest a great Veneration for the eternal and immense Cause of all Beings, as may be seen in very many Passages in his Writings, and seldom receiv'd any remarkable Benefit from God without thankfully acknowledging the Mercy; never made any considerable discovery in Nature, invented any useful Contrivance, or found out any difficult Problem, without setting down his Acknowledgement to the Omnipotent Providence...' Waller, 'Life of Dr. Robert Hooke', p,xxviii.

example, the way each diarist treated an incident of illness and physic-taking. In March 1673, Hooke entered, 'took Dulwich water upon a spoonful of Andrews. wrought quick. went shivering and hazy like an ague to bed, burned about 2 and sweat much after. rose refresht. Cutt my hair short with scizzors and caught cold in my head'.²⁴ Josselin, in August 1650, wrote, 'The night past I annointed my face with oile of roses, that night I rested very litle, in the morning my face was more swelld up into my eye, and more above my gumme, in my cheeke, it is the lords worke, I am his lett him doe as he pleaseth for hee doth what is best'.²⁵ The difference is plain: Josselin ascribes his changes of health to providential and Hooke to physical causes. But the process of scrutiny to which each subjects his physical health is conceptually the same: each records the medicines used and the effect produced. Each then uses this data to reason effect from cause: in Hooke's case, cutting his hair was the cause of his cold, in Josselin's, his swelling was 'the lords worke'.

iv. That, in religious and non-religious accounts of illness, logical or philosophical principles were often applied as a defence.

In spite of Puritan suspicions of rational thought, in favour of the visceral spirituality of the heart, several of this thesis's subjects have shown clear evidence of falling back on reason in illness. Anne Conway was wont to give both spiritual and philosophical explanations of her illness. Writing to Henry More in 1660, she acknowledged her ambition to 'to gitt our reason so fortified by principles of Philosophy and Religion as to be able to with stand all the calamities of fortune'.²⁶

²⁴ Hooke, *Diary*, p.35.

²⁵ Josselin, *Diary*, p.214.

²⁶ Christ's College, Cambridge, MS. 21, f.4.

More had recommended this course of action and, a year later, he restated the advice.

Encouraging Conway not to be melancholy, he wrote:

resolve this with your self perpetually that this life is but either a pleasing or unquiet dreame, and therefore not to be transported nor cast down with any thing, but to place ones content soly in the exercise of sound reason and a good consience, and that Death itself is but the Day of Spring of aeternall Life.²⁷

More's philosophy also argued for 'Reason and Understanding' as a defence against melancholy. In his *Antidote Against Atheisme* (dedicated to Conway), he argued that 'the *Enthusiast's* boldy dictating the carelesse ravings of his own tumultuous fancy for undeniable principles of divine knowledge, confirms the Atheists that the whole buisnesse of religion & notion of a God, is nothing but a troublesome fit of overcurious Melancholy'.²⁸ The reason for succumbing to these 'careless ravings', More claimed was that atheists had 'lost the use of their more noble faculties of Reason and Understanding'.²⁹

Baxter was similarly anxious to apply rational understanding in difficult situations, declaring, 'I never thought I understood any thing till I could *anatomize* it, and see the *parts distinctly*, and the *Conjunction* of the parts as they make up the whole'.³⁰ An Collins, in illness, 'called to mind how all things ordered bee',³¹ while Roger North claimed, I never was perfectly at eas till I had fixt in my mind, 2 grand points of philosophy'.³² Both North's principles applied to pain and illness: '1. That labour and paines was not an evil, beyond the necessity wee have of enduring but life it self, and the greatest eas of it is actuall paine', and '2. [...] that it is in all cases and circumstances, better to dy[e] then to live. And that it is all weakness and infirmity

²⁷ BL, MS. Add. 23216, f.78r.

²⁸ Henry More, *An Antidote Against Atheisme* (London: Daniel, 1653), sig.A1v-A2r.

²⁹ Ibid, sig.A1v.

³⁰ Ibid, I&II, p.6.

³¹ Collins, *Divine Songs and Meditations*, p.7.

³² BL, MS. Add. 32506, f.142v.

that makes us desire to live'.³³ North's philosophy presents a form of self-abasement typical of much Protestant thought, but he moves the argument onto secular ground. Reasoning oneself into a willingness to die, North believed, 'frees us from the greatest solicitude of life, that vast care and passionate concerne of health which afflicts the most veget and athletick constitutions'.³⁴ This secular interest in the conscious manipulation of mental states to affect bodily ones is surely one of the reasons that North's editor, Peter Millard, branded *Notes of Me* 'a document in the attempt to form a science of psychology'.³⁵

But that psychology was easier preached than practised. The example with which I opened this thesis, in which Boyle neglected to call to mind 'what my Curiosity for Dissections has shown me',³⁶ demonstrates the trouble he had conceiving that 'an Instrument with above a thousand Strings (if there were any such) should frequently be out of Tune'.³⁷ But, whether or not it was effectively or consistently deployed, Conway, More, North and Boyle appeared to have shared the view that the application of philosophical logic produced therapeutic effects when applied to bodily disorders. Such a fallback might represent another example of communality in as much as Stephen Shapin has argued that the values and practices of Reformation gentility were adapted by practitioners of seventeenth-century experimental science to form the basic criteria for scientific truth.³⁸ Boyle's perception of an 'undiscerning Multitude, whose Judgment seems rather lodg'd in the Eye than in the Brain'³⁹ reinforces the sense that philosophical capacity was the

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid, f.143r.

³⁵ *Notes of Me*, p.43.

³⁶ Boyle, *Occasional Reflections*, p.188.

³⁷ Ibid, p.189.

³⁸ See Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, esp. chs. 4 and 5.

³⁹ Robert Boyle, *The Christian Virtuoso* (London: Jones, 1690), p.5.

preserve of social elites. Logical principles were often applied to illness, and the shared understanding of the physical senses as somehow debased and the rational faculty as superior, in theory, marked an expression of social class in its intellectual analysis.

v. That, at times of illness, correspondents often sought refuge in familial or intimate epistolary communities. Writers of letters seeking medical advice, by contrast, often sought rhetorical detachment but lapsed quickly into the manner of old epistolary relationships.

The observation that epistolary communities were often a place of refuge during illness has obvious connections to the claim that early modern illness is closely intertwined with communal, family, social and religious life. Members of the Twysden family exchanged letters accounting for the state of their health and the wealth of their households, while Boyle, in illness, wrote to his sister Katherine Jones to implore 'the Assistance of Your fervent Prayers (Deare Sister) which I am confident will both find a shorter way to Heaven, & be better wellcom'd there'.⁴⁰ Gary Schneider has argued that 'Letters in the early modern era were sociotexts: collective social forms designed, understood, and expected to circulate within designated epistolary circles'.⁴¹ And Susan Fitzmaurice observes that exchanging descriptions of and advice about illness was a significant aspect of that sociability. Taking up an example with which this thesis has been concerned, she notes, 'It seems that John Finch's advice to Anne Conway was important as brotherly assurance of his

⁴⁰ Royal Society, RB/3/1, f.128r.

⁴¹ Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity*, p.22.

concern for and devotion to her; Henry More's advice to Anne Conway was as significant in cementing their friendship as her discussion and critique of his work were in building their correspondence'.⁴²

Writing from Fleet Prison to his enraged father-in-law after his clandestine marriage in 1602, Donne had an urgent reason to build familial relationships, and he co-opted his health in that task. 'But since yt it hath pleased God, to ioyn wth you in punishing thereof, wth increasing my sickness, and that he gives me now Audience by prayer, yt emboldeneth me also to address my humble request to yor Lp:', he wrote.⁴³ The letter, which survives in the Folger Shakespeare Library, is written in a fair, italic hand, and signed with as much formality as space allowed with the subscription spread across three lines and Donne's signature crammed into the bottom right-hand corner of the page – all material features conspiring to imply that Donne was in earnest (as well he might have been, being dependent on More's forgiveness for his health and liberty). The following day he wrote again, producing another letter in a fair script and bearing a signature professing himself to be 'yours in all dutifull obedience', that squeezed his name into a corner, leaving a significant gap between that and the letter's text. Here, he reiterated his claim to physical and financial dependence on More: 'From you, to whom next to God I shall owe my health, by enjoying by your meditation this mild change of imprisonment, I desire to derive all my good fortune and content in this world'.⁴⁴ These letters may be atypical, the products of extraordinary circumstances, but they nonetheless exemplify the intimate connection in early modern epistolary culture between health, wealth and family: where the Twysdens and the Boyle and Conway circles sought in illness to

⁴² Susan Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A Pragmatic Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2002), p.99.

⁴³ Folger Shakespeare Library, MS. L.b.528.

⁴⁴ Folger Shakespeare Library, MS. L.b.529.

fall back on familial networks, Donne, ailing and imprisoned, had to begin by rebuilding the one his behaviour had profoundly destabilised.

Even letters seeking medical advice were often circulated among existing epistolary communities. Furly, in illness, consulted his friend Locke; Lhwyd turned to his regular correspondent Martin Lister. Some letters, as I have shown, however, sought the expertise of a stranger. Milton provides the classic example, writing for a stranger (the physician Thevenot), through an acquaintance (the scholar Philaras), and changing epistolary style from plain case-history to an argument for the prophetic powers of his illness. In concluding, I wish to make one additional remark about Milton's use of Apollinus Rhodius's *Argonautica* to make his case: by analysing Rhodius, Milton positioned himself in an epistolary relationship with the Athenian scholar Philaras whose terms had been previously established. When Milton called to mind 'the description of the Salmydessian seer Phineus in the *Argonautics*', he was drawing on a strand of conversation begun in earlier correspondence. In 1652, he had written to Philaras thanking him for his praise of Milton's *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*. In that letter, Milton wrote, 'For, as the great Alexander himself, when carrying on the war in the remotest parts of the earth, declared that he had undergone such great labours for the sake of the good opinion of the Athenians, why should I not congratulate myself, and think myself honoured to the highest, in having received praises from one in whom singly at this day the Arts of the old Athenians and all their celebrated excellencies appear, after so long interval, to revive and rebloom?'⁴⁵ The letter describing his blindness also begins with an expression of Milton's regard for Philaras via his admiration for all things Greek. Having been, Milton says, 'from boyhood an especial worshipper of all

⁴⁵ Milton, *Works*, XII, p.57.

bearing the Greek name and of your Athens in chief, so I have always had a firm private persuasion that that city would some time or other requite me splendidly for my affection'.⁴⁶ This suspicion, he says, had been realised 'since in you, an Athenian born, I have had bestowed upon me one of the most loving of friends'.⁴⁷ Although Apollonius was not Athenian, by invoking the only surviving Hellenistic epic and, more importantly, replicating the behaviour of fourth-century Athenian rhapsodes, Milton appears to signal a departure from the case history designed for Thevenot in favour of a resumption of the literary kinship he had previously fostered with Philaras.

vi. That collecting textual responses to illness might be considered as important a habit as composing.

In my final chapter, I offered several examples of collection as a response to illness. Arguing for a connection between emergent notions of authorship and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century collecting practices, Marjorie Swann has claimed that 'Renaissance humanism fostered not only a vogue for antiques as physical objects, but also catalyzed the development of new subject positions for collectors of literary artefacts which situated readers and writers at complicated junctions of the textual and the material, the individual and the communal'.⁴⁸ Thus, Matthias Lynen compiled a commonplace book containing Henry Wotton's 'Hymn to My God in a Night of my Late Sickness' and meditations on death taken from Henry Vane. This is evidently material that could be referred to at times of illness but, equally, the volume was

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.65.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p.156.

clearly not designed for Lynen's eyes alone, bearing the signatures and coats of arms of many of his friends and acquaintances. Likewise, Frevile gathered devotional material requiring the participation of the entire family at the sickbed. And the verse miscellany at Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. poet. 142 contains a jumble of material written by the hands of multiple owners and contributors.

One tendency that emerges from this situation is the habit of collectors taking ownership of texts and customising them for personal use. Some authors, in fact, designed texts with this behaviour specifically in mind. John Foxe's 750-page *Locorum Communium Praecipua Rerum Capita* (1672) offered a printed introduction and an index, but was dominated by blank pages for the reader's note-taking. Julius Caesar's copy of the text, which he continued to write in throughout his life, survives in the British Library, covered almost comprehensively with notes, including two pages collecting scriptural verses to be read in affliction.⁴⁹ Similarly, the way in which Donne's 'Hymne to God, my God in my Sicknes' was handled after its publication in the 1635 edition of his poems suggests that habits of miscellaneity were transferred to printed texts. The volume of the 1633 *Poems* held at the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado, contains additional material written in from the 1669 *Poems*, including the 'Hymne', written onto a supplementary set of end papers, while the 1633 edition of *Deaths Duell* at Princeton contains four poems, all of them first printed in 1635, all with an explicit focus on death, written onto the volume's end papers.⁵⁰ Both volumes demonstrate a degree of fidelity to Donne the author, though not to the integrity of the volume as published. More importantly, both convey a sense of having collected publicly available material to personalise the

⁴⁹ BL, MS. Add. 6038, f.23r-v.

⁵⁰ See United States Air Force Academy, Colorado, STC 7045 and Princeton University Library, RHT 17th-188.

volumes for their owners' particular uses.

These collected, miscellaneous texts connect with the rest of the material I have treated in this thesis in being performative. Some poetry, like Hester Pulter's visionary account of the solar system, appears to have been composed in part to enact an imaginative reaction to physical trauma; and, likewise, verse collected in miscellanies and commonplace books provided material on which to ground a reflexive response, similar to that enabled by the meditative exercises of Anne Halkett and Alatheia Bethell. In all cases – be it that of the diarist seeking to analyse life events for evidence of providence or correction, the producer of an after-the-fact-memoir seeking to edit and repackage raw life-materials, the correspondent developing familial or intimate relationships, or the collector or composer of verses on illness – the author or compiler appears to respond to physical crises by falling back on the support of domestic, social or religious systems for interrogating and rationalising life experience.

As a final conclusion, a sense of collectivity – in a loose sense, referring to families, social, religious and epistolary communities, and to personal collecting – appears to dominate seventeenth-century life-writing. Often it is occasional and performative, conceived with a practical purpose in mind and, to that extent, the material texts that provided the framework for thinking about selfhood offered excellently adaptable forums for addressing the personal and religious challenges that illness imposed.

Elizabeth Freke's book of personal memoranda and recipes demonstrates the connection between two forms of collectivity with which this thesis has dealt: the sense of belonging to a social community and the habit of compiling and collecting.

An avid collector, Freke lists her household medicines and recipes, as I have shown, in such a manner as to express not only her medical learning and resources, but also the place of her recipes in a wider community of healers and medicine sharers: each recipe is assigned to its source. Likewise, Freke's autobiographical 'Remembrances' place her as a family member (or, when the family-group was fractured, a member of a social circle) and a member of her parish community, albeit an indomitable one who berated her husband and quarrelled with her bishop. Instances of discord between, for instance, Freke and her husband are recorded as troublesome moments of isolation from her community (and sometimes her property). On one occasion, she recorded, ruefully, 'I haueing bin Marryed Aboue six & twenty years, And haue had noe place to rest my wearyed Carkas In, but Troubling my Frinds this was As I remember the seventh time since I were An unfotunatt Wife that I have come to An empty house with Nothing in itt but Bare Walls'.⁵¹

Given her apparent sense of the connection between property, family and social propriety, Freke's small collection of devotional verse written into her 'Remembrances' might be taken for an assertion of individuality in response to illness. She certainly identifies herself with these verses, affixing her signature to each one, but, as I have argued, such behaviour, as well as insisting on Freke's ownership of the verses, bears comparison to her habit of assigning her recipes to a source, implying that these verses have been written and recorded for the benefit of a broader readership than solely herself. With their scope prescribed by the set of scriptural texts with which Freke introduces the verses, like many of the texts that this thesis has encountered, they appear to be offered as exemplars for devotional performance in illness.

⁵¹ BL, MS. Add. 45718, f.58v.

The afterlives of many of the texts I have treated suggest their communal and collective nature was realised by their inheritors. Thornton's books were inscribed by her descendants, and Rich's texts copiously annotated by her family chaplain. Even Hester Pulter – whose imaginative poetry presents one of the more individualised responses to illness, with few signs of its having been allowed to circulate in manuscript – appears to have composed some of her poems expressly for her children, and her scribally produced text bears the interpretative marks of various subsequent annotators. Donne's apparent struggle to constrain the circulation of his 'Hymne' amid a culture of collecting, swapping and circulating texts demonstrates the high value that seventeenth-century readers placed on devotional material offering a performative approach to illness.

In this thesis's four central chapters, I have principally been concerned with presenting evidence in parallel rather than in series, but, in conclusion, it is possible to draw out a narrative thread running through my materials. The starting point is that the seventeenth-century diary appears to grow from a tradition of life accounting derived from financial bookkeeping, in which data is collected and analysed quantitatively, rather than the life (and especially the experience of illness) being described as a unique or powerfully emotional experience. Autobiographies often figured as members of the network of textual transmission in which diaries appear – usually as an end text summarising the product of earlier calculations performed in diaries and account books, rather than than making expressions of self-assertion. Often, these were produced for the benefit of family circles in which the author moved, but I have argued that rather than casting the autobiographer as the romantic protagonist of his or her own life story, in many cases, these texts are designed

socially to give account of (and to assert or advance) the author's position in the family hierarchy. In moving from autobiography to letters, there may appear something of a gulf to be bridged, but letter-writing and the production of autobiographical texts do have aspects in common. Letters written at times of illness, like diaries and autobiographies, tended to fall back on the family or social network of the writer, co-opting family members into assistance. The Twysdens, for instance, were clearly accustomed to considering their illnesses in the light of the family economy and to passing information about both between family members. Finally, the commonplace collections that I examine in the final chapter were also often collective productions bequeathed through generations of family members to offer practical advice in various trials of life. Even dedicated poetry written about illness tended to favour practical devotional responses offered as exemplars for future generations, rather than as expressions of emotional selfhood.

In order to reach these conclusions, I have deliberately brought the scholarly approaches from criticism of "The Body" and embodiment into dialogue with the archival scholarship of life-writing and manuscript studies. In doing so, I have been able to show that, while assumptions of Galenism and Paracelsianism that embodiment critics discuss are often embedded in my subject's treatment of health and illness, they draw less on those resources than on the raft of religious and cultural practices I have discussed. Although early modern models for understanding psycho-physiology are important, recourse to the manuscript archives enabled me to uncover evidence of illness described in terms which were not self-expressive, but, rather, which sought to constrain the unruly tendencies of the imaginative life and to subject the experience of illness to detached, providential analysis. Illness was more

commonly used as a marker of the patient's relationship to God and pious society than as a transcendentally emotional or invigorating experience. The result, perhaps counterintuitively, is a contribution to the growing chorus of scholarship debunking the Burkhardtian myth of the Renaissance as bringing about a birth of subjectivity. Rather than attempting self-assertion, my subjects engage in collective, prescribed and typological behaviour to describe their illnesses. These examples demonstrate that it is possible to expand the frames of reference for reflecting on illness: particular bodies and bodily experiences can be observed in their cultural contexts without automatically turning to the lens of generalised, theoretical understandings of "The Body" to focus the discussion. My subjects deploy the resources of a self-abasing culture to make sense of their personal illnesses and, in doing so, they illuminate the possibilities for scholarly attention to be given to actual bodies suffering actual illnesses without historical context being sacrificed.

APPENDIX I.

TABLE OF ASTROLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL SYMBOLS

ASTROLOGY

♃	Jupiter
♂	Mercury
♂	Mars
☾	Moon
♓	Pisces
♄	Saturn
☼	Sun
♀	Venus

CHEMISTRY

℥	ounces
℞	recipe

APPENDIX II.

MS. AND PRINTED VARIANTS OF HENRY WOTTON'S 'HYMNE TO MY GOD'

British Library, MS. Add. 74231, f.35r-v.

A Hymne of Sr Hen. Wotton

Oh thou great power, in whom i move
For whom I live, to whom I die,
Behold me through they beams of loue
Whilest on this couch of tears i Lye;
And cleanse my sordid soul within
By thy christs Blood, the Bath of sin.

No hallowed oyls, no grains i need
No rags of saints, no purging dire,
One rosie drop from Davids seed,
Was worlds of seas to quench thine ire.
O pretious Ransome! which once paid
That Consummatum est, was said:

And said by him that said no more
But seal'd it with his sacred breath
Thou then, that hast dispung'd my score,
And dying, wast the death of death;
Be to me now, on thee I call,
My life, my strength, my joy, my all.

Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. poet. 147, f.101.

A Hymne to My God in a Night of my Late Sickness

Oh thou great Power! in whom wee move,
By whom wee live, to whom wee die,
Behold me through thy beams of Love,
Whilst on this Couch of Tears I lie;
And cleanse my sordid Soul within
By thy Christs Blood, the Bath of Sin.

No hallowed Oyls, no grains I need,
No new-borne drams of Saints, no purging Fire;
One Rosie drop from David's Seed
Was Worlds of Seas to quench thine Ire.
O precious Ransome! which once paid,
That Consummatum est was said;

And said by him that said no more,
But seal'd it with his Sacred Breath:
Thou, then, that hast dispong'd our score,
And dying wert the Death of Death,
Bee now whilst on thy name wee call,
Our life, our Strength, our Joy, our All!

Reliquiae Wottonianae or; a Collection of Lives, Letters, Poems (London: Maxey, 1651), p.515.

A Hymn to my God in a night of my late Sicknesse

Oh thou great Power, in whom I move,
For whom I *live*, to whom I *die*,
Behold me through thy beames of *love*,
Whilest on this *Couch* of *tears* I lye;
 And Cleanse my sordid *soul* within,
 By thy *Christs Bloud*, the *bath* of sin.

No hallowed oyls, no grains I need.
No rags of Saints, no purging fire,
One rosie drop from *Davids Seed*
Was worlds of seas, to quench thine Ire.
 O pretious Ransome! which once paid,
 That *Consummatum est* was said:

And said by *him*, that said no more,
But *seal'd* it with his sacred *breath*.
Thou then, that hast dispung'd my score,
And dying, wast the death of *death*;
 Be to me now, on thee I call
 My Life, my Strength, my Joy, my All.

APPENDIX III.

EDWARD LAPWORTH'S DEATHBED VERSES IN FOUR MS. VERSIONS

British Library, MS. Stowe 962, ff. 56v-57

Dr Latworth on his death bedd

1. My god I speake it from a full assurance
fayth shall grant clayme by appropriation
my god that holdes my spiritt debtor in durance
fetterd wth sinn, & shackeld wth temptation
deare for thy mercie soone inlarge me
nor sin nor hell nor ought beside shall charge me
2. My soule may now be gon unto her maker
Maker of her but not of her infection
for thats her owne, when gods loue doth for sake her
finall for sakinge is not in election
for when by grace, god once shall make his dwelling
there may be smitinge but there is no felling.
3. Earth what art thou? a poynt, a senselesse center:
frends wt are you? an ages trustless triall:
life wt art thou? a dayly doubtfull venture
death wt art thou? a better life's espiall
flesh wt art thou? a loose untempred mortar:
sicknes wt art thou? heauens churlish porter:
4. Sweete Jesu, bid thy porter then admitt me
I hold this life & lifes delight in loathing
If ought be on my back wch doth not fitt me
strip me of all & giue me bridall cloathing
So shall I be receeued by my liuerie
my prisoner, soule, shall joys at Gaols deliury.

Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 781, f.137

‘Dr. Latworth on his deathbed’

My God I speake it from full assurance
ffaith shall avowe Clayme by apropiation
My God that holdes my spirrit deptor in durance
ffettered with sinne and shackled with temptation
 Deare for thy Mercie soone enlarge mee
 nor sinne nor Hell nor ought beside shall charge me

My sowle may nowe be gon unto her maker
Maker of her but not of her infection
for thats her owne when Gods love doth forsake her
ffinall forsakinge vs not in election
 ffor wheare by grace God once shall make his dwellinge
 There may be smitinge but there is noe felling

Sweete Iesu bid thy Porter then admit mee
I hold this life and lives delight in loathing
If ought be on my backe that doth not fit me
Strip mee of all and give me bridall Cloathing
 Soe shall I be receved by my liverye
 And Prisoner Sowle shall ioy at Iailes deliverye

Earth what art thou? a pointe a senceles Center
ffrindes what are you? an ages trustles tryall
life what art thou? a daily doubtfull venture
Death what art thou? a better life espiall
 Flesh what art thou? a loose untemperd Morter
 And sickness what art thou? Heavens churlish Porter.

Verses Written by Dctr Latworth in an Extreimity of Sicknes wch he suffered

O God I speake yt wth a full assurance
Fayth doth a vowe clayme by Appropriation
Thou that dost hold this Debtors spyrite in Durance
Fette'd wth synne, and shakled wth Temptation.
 O of them endles Mercye nowe enlarge me
 Nor Hell, nor Synne, nor ought bsyde shall Charge me
Now may my Sowle departe Into hir Maker
Maker of hir but not of hir Infection
That ys hir owne, when Gods helpe doth forsake her
Fynall forsakinge is not in her Election
 For where by Grace he once hath plac'd his dwellinge
 There may be smightinge but there ys no felling
Earth what arte thou? a poynte, a senslesse Center
Frends what are ye? an ages trustlesse tryall
Lyfe what art thou? a dayly doutfull venter
Death what art thou? a better lifes espiall
 Flesh what art thou? a loose untemper'd Morter
 And sicknes what art thou? Heaven churlish Porter
Sweete Jhesu let thy Porter then admitt mee
I hould this worlde, and worlds delay in Loathing
Yt ought be on my backe that doth not fitt thee
Strip me of all and give me Bridall clothinge
 So shall I be receyved by my Lyuerye
 And prisoner Sowle receyue a Jayle delyuerye.

British Library, MS. Egerton 2877, f.104r

Jehovae Liberatori

Mr Johnsons
Verses

My God: I speake to thee wth full assurance
faith will awove my claime by appropriation
My God therefore wth holdst my debted soule in durance
fettred with sinne & shackled wth temptation
& of thine endlesse mercy soone inlarge me
so sinne, nor hell, nor ought besydes shall charge me

My soule desires to be wth thee her maker
Maker of her but not of her infection,
that is her owne when Gods helpe doth forsake her
but finall for saking is not found in election
for where he once by grace doth make his dwelling
there maie be strokes but never anie felling

Earth what art thou a point, a sencelesse center
friend what are thou? an ages trustlesse triall
Lyfe what art thou? a daily doubtfull venter
Death what art thou? a better liues espiall
fleshe what art thou? a loose untempered mortar
And sicknes what art thou? but heavens churlish porter,

My God then bidd thie porter to admitt me
I hold this world & worlde delaie in loathing
if ought be on my back that doth not fitt me
stripp me quite of all & giue me better cloathing
So shall I be areyned by my coate & liuery
& prisoned soule reioyce at Gaole deliurye.
finis.

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